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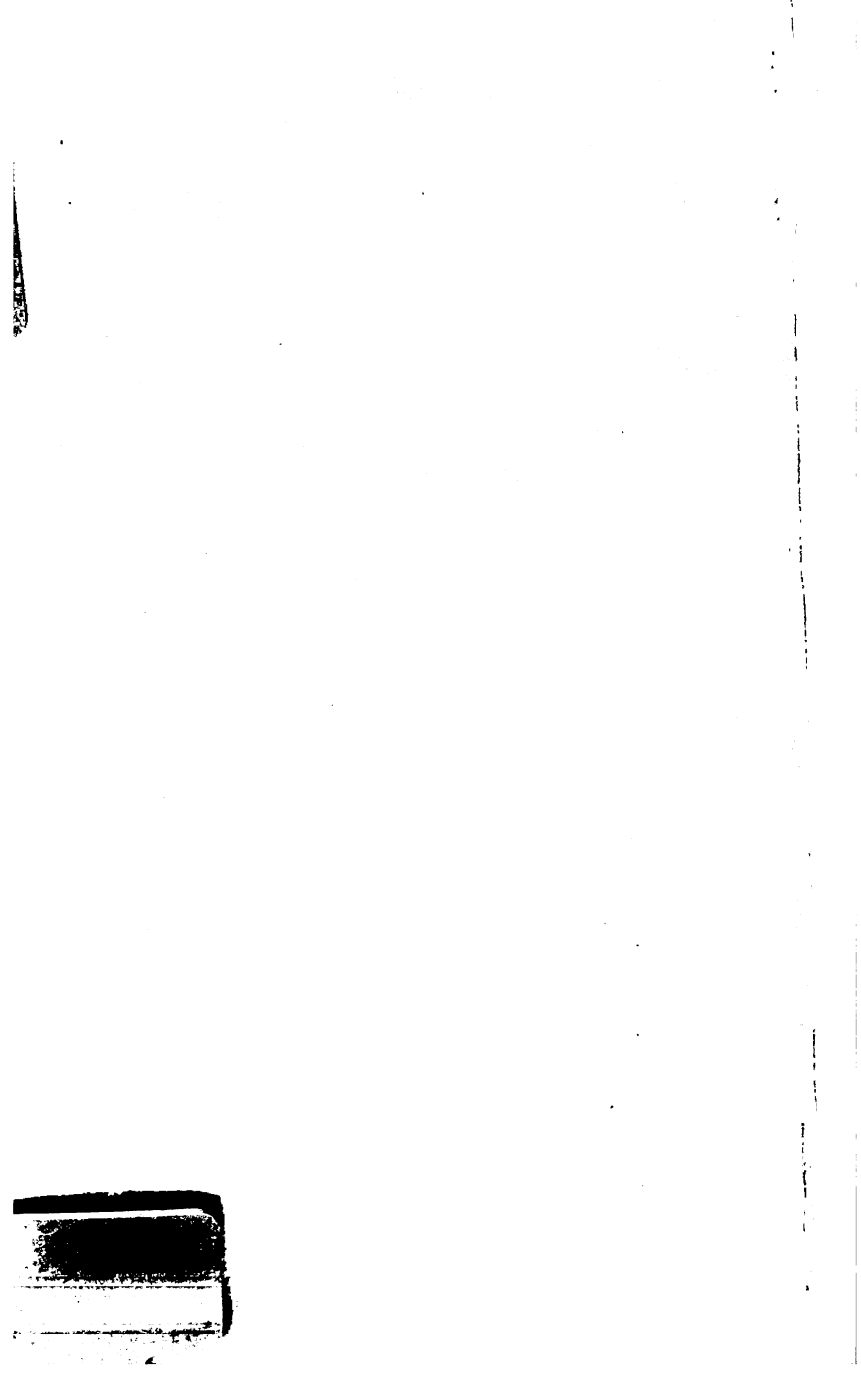
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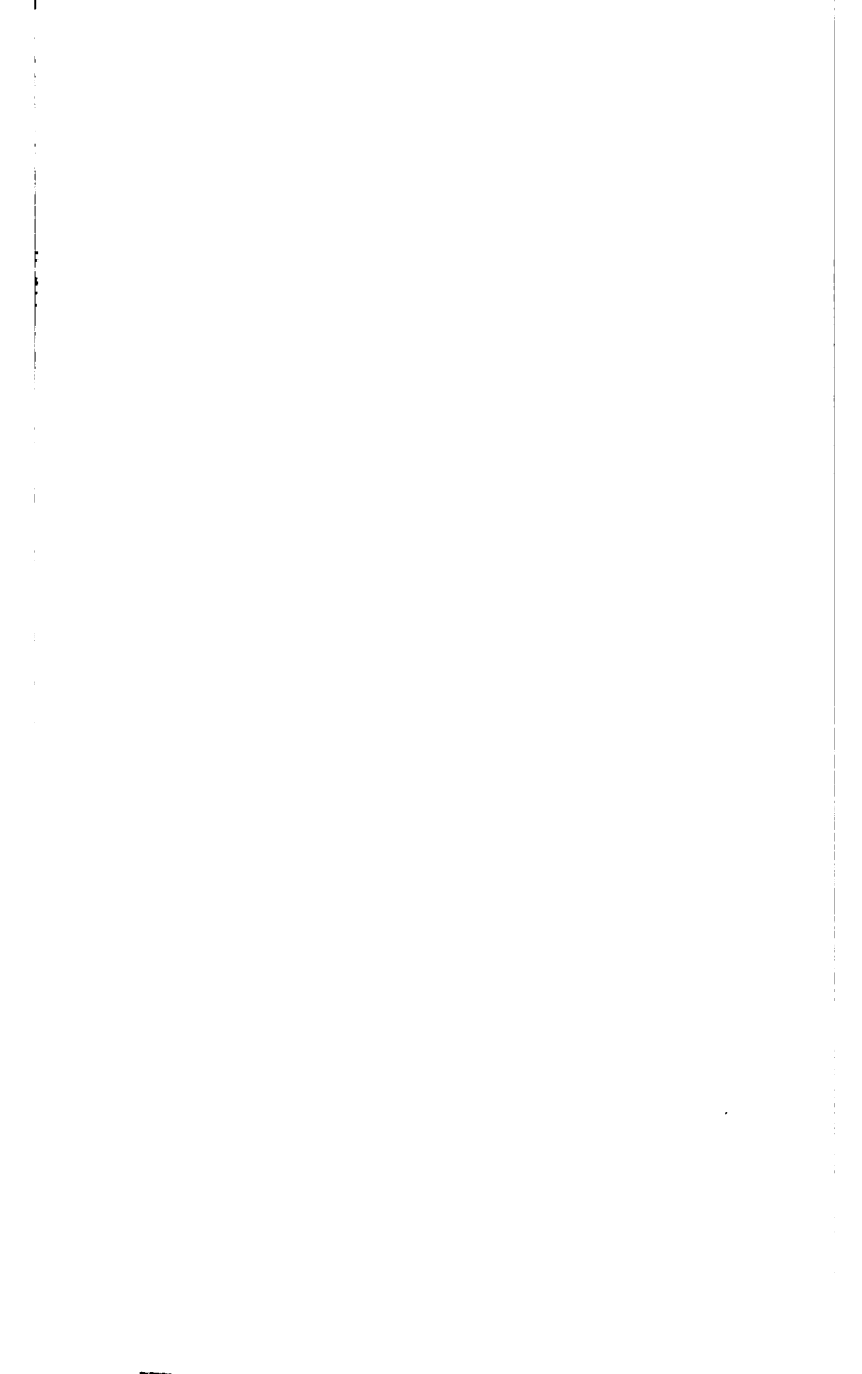
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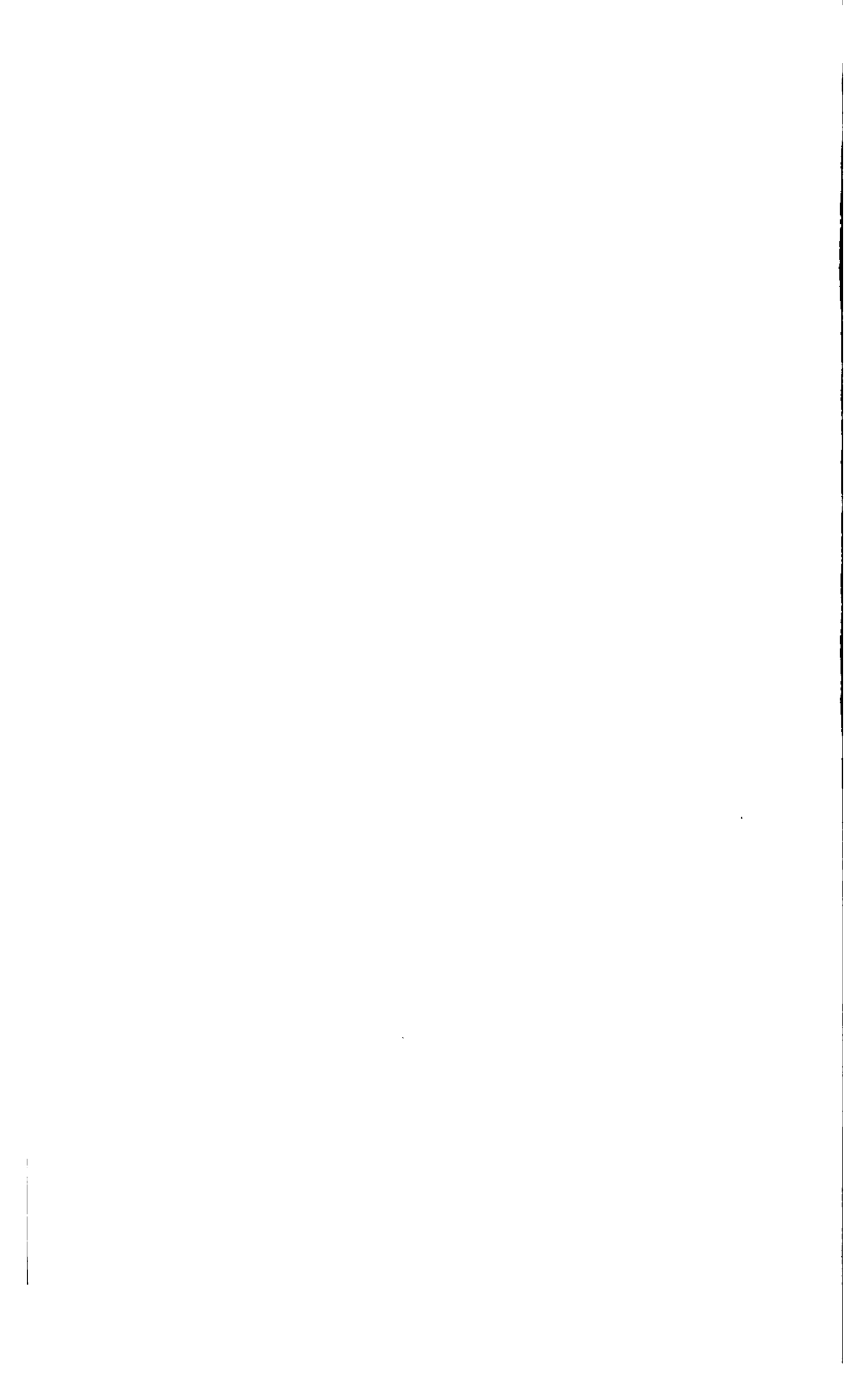
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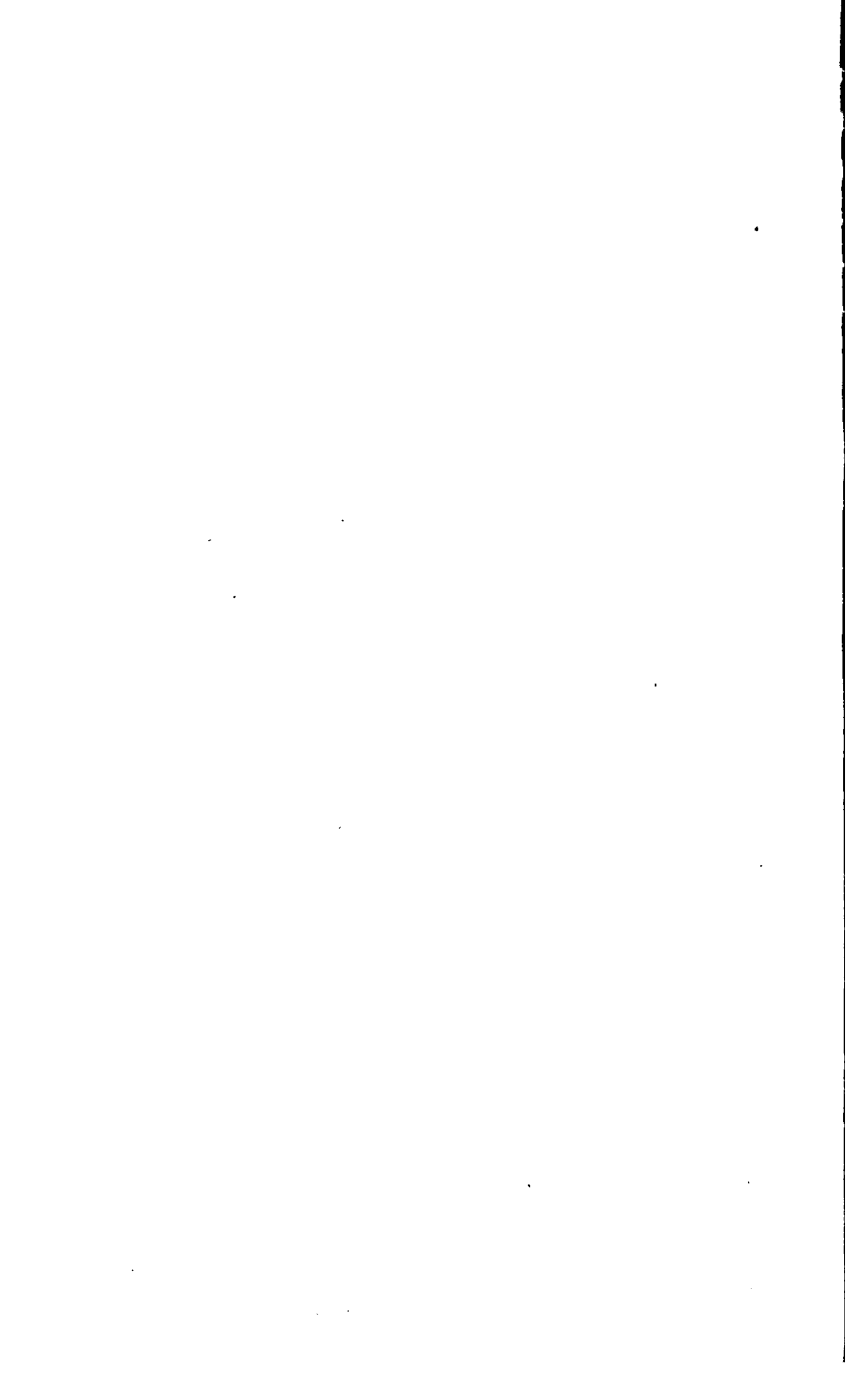








THE ADVENTURES
OF
DOWNY V. GREEN





THE ADVENTURES
OF
DOWNY V. GREEN

RHODES SCHOLAR AT OXFORD

BY
GEORGE CALDERON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE
1902

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THE ADVENTURES
OF
DOWNY V. GREEN

RHODES SCHOLAR AT OXFORD

I

It is more than six years since Sir Verdant died. His career is fully described in the Supplement to the Dictionary of National Biography.

Readers of that immortal work, 'The Adventures of Verdant Green,' will remember that in his early days he was intended for the profession of a country squire. The agricultural depression altered the face of things, and Verdant went to the Bar. He prospered.

There was certainly, as the Dictionary says, 'some question in the Radical papers as to his qualifications for the elevated post of a judge of

B

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the High Court.' But it is not true that 'he owed his advancement to his influential connections on the Sappey side.' It was a well-deserved honour. Though neither learned nor eloquent, Sir Verdant had that indefinable quality so essential in a judge, which can only be described as 'the Court manner:' a certain detachment of mind, a certain freshness, and ignorance of matters of common knowledge, which is so necessary to lighten the otherwise tedious formality of the law.

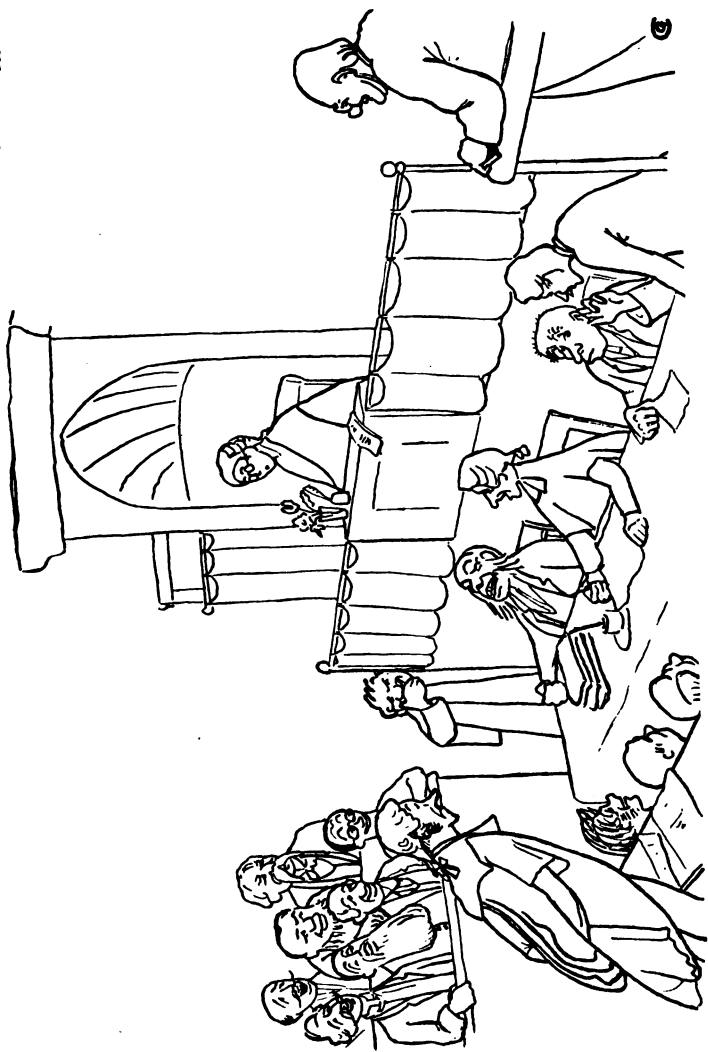
However, it is not with Sir Verdant that we are concerned, but with his family.

His own marriage with Miss Martha Honeywood was blessed with two sons, Verdant and Tony, and with three daughters.

Tony developed a scientific turn. He discovered a secret for the preparation of soap from petroleum, and emigrated to the State of Lavinia in North America to work it on the spot. The business thrived. He married Miss Angelica Downy, a penniless New England beauty, and had issue five sons and four daughters.

The eldest of all these was christened Downy Verdant, after his two grandfathers; and he is the hero of this book.

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Sir Verdant

II

MR. TONY GREEN'S 'Lavinia Soap' is known all over the civilised world. His works soon collected a small town about them, named Greenopolis, in honour of its founder. The town itself was a wilderness of arid pavement and throbbing walls; but it was set in the midst of some of the finest scenery in North America. Mr. Tony Green's own residence, Verdant Hall, was three miles away up the Wapiti Valley, on the edge of the forest, above the rushing waters of the Washaback.

In due time Downy went to study under Mr. Parkin, an Englishman who had drifted over in the hope of finding a gold-mine, but had been washed up by the way in Greenopolis, and established the only school in the town. From him Downy learned the ultimate and inscrutable facts of Latin and Greek grammar, together with a smattering of other subjects. He plodded at it for

some years, and had every prospect of advancing no further: for Mr. Tony Green, who intended to put him into his counting-house at nineteen, thought—good, easy man—that a larger education might ‘spoil him for business.’ But the arrival of a new personage in the household at Verdant Hall brought about a change in the plan of Downy’s education.

That personage was Mr. Jonathan Downy, father to Mrs. Tony Green.

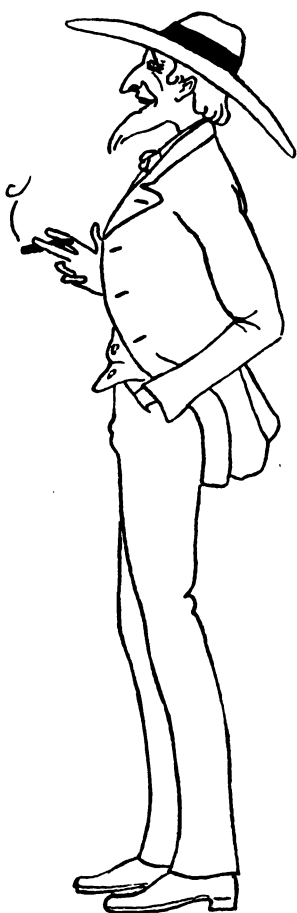
Mr. Downy’s career had been unfortunate: all his business projects had miscarried with resolute persistency. But it was fully recognised, both by his friends and by himself, that he was one of the smartest men in the States. In the War of Secession he fought loyally for the North; but he had made so sure of losing that he had invested all his fortune in large slave estates in the South. Victory ruined him. After years of toil in every capacity, from a lumberman to a journalist, he had once more amassed a comfortable fortune. But he would have been ashamed to be satisfied with a mere competence. *Aut Rockefeller aut nihil* was his motto. He made a corner in gamboge; he could have been a millionaire in a week: but he

determined to be a billionaire, by holding out for starvation prices. However, necessity, which is the mother of invention, undermined him: a young German, whose wits were whetted by the crisis, suddenly flooded the market with a substitute which he extracted from coal-tar; and Mr. Downy's creditors had to hire a man to take the gamboge away and bury it. So it was with all his business projects—he was always just one grain too clever to succeed. But he bore it buoyantly, unaware that he was growing old, and convinced that he would achieve affluence in time. During one of his temporary crises, Mrs. Green, distressed to find that her father was blacking boots in a second-class hotel in Chicago, invited him to come and stay at Greenopolis. He accepted, eager to refresh himself for a new plunge. But a life of ease soon loosened the sinews of his resolution; the visit grew longer and longer, till it was tacitly understood by all that Mr. Downy was a permanency.

Mr. Downy, or 'Old Man Downy,' as he was generally known, had a fine tolerant contempt for Mr. Tony Green's ways of business. It is true that Mr. Green was far richer than Mr. Downy

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had ever been in all his life ; but then he was not nearly so rich as Mr. Downy had hoped to be ; and that was the standard by which he measured other people's fortunes. Mr. Downy went about the works questioning and studying. He offered no suggestions. He only chuckled.



©

He only chuckled



III

OF a summer evening it was Mr. Green's custom to sit in the veranda of his house, smoking a briar-root pipe, and gazing down the valley, across the pines and the rapids, at the smoky town which he had created in that Indian Paradise. He looked at it with fatherly satisfaction, heaving a fat contented sigh from time to time, and thinking tranquilly of nothing. He was sitting there one evening in May of 1902, when Mr. Downy came sauntering round the corner. A lean, limber figure clothed in white ducks; a bright wakeful face; one eye made for looking, the other for laughing; a monster cheroot; a broad straw hat, of the kind known in Lavinia as a 'cow's-breakfast:' his whole appearance one of jaunty youth which made his pursy son-in-law look old beside him. He sat down in a deck-chair, and joined Mr. Green in looking at Greenopolis.

After a silence of some length, he tilted his

hat over his eyes, pulled a table towards him with his foot, laid his legs on it, folded his arms, and cocked his head on one side.

‘Tony Green,’ he said, ‘you’re makin’ a mistake; and I’d like you to hear my o-pinion on the subject.’

‘I’m delighted, Mr. Downy, to listen to the opinion of a man of your experience. You have never said anything yet, but I have noticed that you seemed . . . hardly satisfied with the way I conduct my business.’

‘As for your business, Tony Green, I have nothin’ to say. For a Soap-bug, you’re the biggest Soap-bug in the States. I reckon you draw your 80,000 dollars or so a year from your works, and if you’re contented with *that*, it’s not for me to speak agin it. From the lie of the land I feel con-vinced, as I told you in the Fall, that there’s a gold-bearin’ reef runs right under your bilin’-shop; an’ if the place was mine, I should demolish that bilin’-shop and commence prospectin’ this evenin’. But you’re a born Britisher, and thar’s an end of it . . . However, that’s not what I wanted to talk to you about. I wanted to talk to you about my grandson Downy.’

‘About Downy?’

‘How is he gettin’ on with his schoolin’?’

‘Mr. Parkin speaks very well of his progress. Latin and Greek,’ he says, ‘he has practically finished. History and geography, of course, he completed two or three years ago. And this last term has been given up almost entirely to book-keeping and shorthand. In September I shall take him into the counting-house; and there he is, a made man for life.’

‘Now, Tony, my boy, it’s right thar you’re mistaken. The eddication that b’y has had so fur might fit him vurry well for one of the learned professions, where a man don’t have to know anything—for the Church, or the Law, or the Legislature; it might do well enough for a business man in England nowadays: but it *will not do* for an Amurrkan man of business in t’is risin’ generation.’

‘No doubt it’s not a practical training, Mr. Downy. But, after all, my boy will soon learn the ways of business once he’s in the Works. And I’ve always felt it right that he should have a good general education before he settles down into harness, so that he may have something to occupy his mind in his leisure hours.’

‘Tony Green, you miscomprehend my meanin’

entirely. As for practical trainin', the b'y that could not learn enough of what's practical in a week, to conduct the sort of business that you mean him for, is no grandson of mine. No, *Sir* ! What I complain of is that Downy's eddication has not been *on*-practical enough. It's a purty idee of yours, that of Downy's bilin' soap in the day-time, and settin' on the stoop of an evenin', sayin' over "Mensa, mensa, mensum" and the principal exports of Kamchatka, to while away his cultured leisure ; but that's not the way fortunes are goin' to be made in Amurrka in the twentieth century.

'Hev you not observed how much slicker your business goes along since you put that young Harvard man into the management? Some oneddedicated man comes along, in the hope of sellin' a hunderd dollars' worth of alkali for a thousand. "Who's your manager?" says he to the clerk. "Mr. Micklethwaite, a Harvard man!" says he proudly. "A Harvard man!" That cows him. An' all the time he's settin' in Mr. Micklethwaite's bu-reau, talkin' to him, he's thinkin': "He's a Harvard man!" Soon he's fair ashamed of the deal he came to perpose. But he outs with it at last. Mr. Micklethwaite just looks at him,

thinkin' of nothin' at all, as like as not. The varmin gets oneasy, and climbs right down. An onedicated man is fair afraid of a college man. It's the on'y social distinction in Amurrka—'ceptin' niggers. They may not learn much at college; but nobody but themselves knows just how little it is. That's the secret of their power.

'An' it ain't on'y that. The man who is goin' to make his fortune nowadays must be able to hold up his head in the best eddicated society. When he runs over to his house in Park Lane, and wants to get some concession, say, for openin' up the interior of Scotland to trade, he has to rub shoulders with Dooks and Duchesses, and Kings and Emperors; and he'll make nothin' of them if they're talkin' over his head every time. He must know philahsaphy, geahlagy, bacteriahlagy, anthrapahlagy, and all the sciences. Ef the company is conversin' of love and merriage an' the Duchess says "I agree with Arastotle," he must tumble to it at once, or she'll never consint to be merried to him. No, *Sir*, my advice to you is, let Downy go to college.'

'I agree with you to a large extent,' said Mr. Green, 'as to the advantages of a university education. But the expense of it would be very

great, and you must remember that my income depends entirely on the demand there may be for my soap. I have seven other children besides Downy.'

'My darter has done her dooty as a wife and as a mother.'

'What I do for one I must do for all. But I may not be able to give all my sons a college education. Harvard and Yale are expensive places.'

'Tony Green, you can do a monstrous deal better than send him to Harvard or Yale or any college in the United States of Amurrka. When a big nation perposes to eat up a little nation, she begins by sendin' missionaries and traders to study the language and habits of the natives. And when the eatin' begins, it's the man that knows most about them that gets the biggest chunk. Amurrka is perposin' to eat up the little island where you were born; the missionaries and traders have commenced to fasten on right smart, and the meal will soon begin. Now or never is the time for a smart young Amurrkan to go and study the ways of the Britisher in his native habitat, ef he wants a place kep' for him. We were discussin', the other day, the career of the late Cecil J. Rhodes, nope?'

‘The finest Englishman of the century!’

‘I reckon you’re about right. He might have been a Senator in most any of the States of North Amurrka. We were discussin’ more pertikerlarly the provisions of his will, nope?’

‘His will was the finest thing he ever did in his whole life.’

‘So I see it stated in your English noospapers.’

‘Do you mean to say that you don’t agree?’

‘Wahl! It’s like this. Ef I was an African nigger down Sahara way, and Eu-rope commenced sendin’ me missionaries and whisky-traders with a view to studyin’ my ways, an’ ef it was life or death to keep them from knowin’ my weak spots, do you think I would invite a hunderd or so of them to come over every year and enter free at the University of Timbuctoo with the local title of Grand Dook? Not much! . . . That’s what Cecil J. Rhodes has done for your pore little island. Yerkes and Pierpont Morgan have opened the missionary and whisky business right smart: they’ve gotten a big cargo of ivory for a monstrous small outlay of bibles and bug-juice. But the real banquet is still ahead; and when the time comes, I should be sorry to set an’ look down from the Up Above, an’ see my grandson left out in the cold.’

‘ But even supposing that I agreed with you as to the benefit of sending Downy to Oxford, what chance do you think that he would have of securing one of the Rhodes Scholarships ? He certainly knows Latin and Greek ; but I take it that a young man must have higher qualifications than these to secure such a prize.’

‘ See here, Tony Green ; I wouldn’t set too much by Downy’s Lattun and Greek. I shouldn’t wonder ef there ain’t a heap of Greek and Lattun words they don’t come across at Mr. Parkins’s establishment.’

‘ But if you don’t even believe him to be a good scholar, what hope do you imagine that there is for him ? ’

‘ I’ve been studyin’ up Cecil J. Rhodes’s will purty keerfully, side by side with Mr. Stead’s rough draft, which he drew up when they was in jail together for the Jameson Raid ; an’ I see they reckon up the qualifications this way—thirty per cent. for knowin’ Lattun an’ Greek, an’ the other seventy for bein’ tall.’

Mr. Downy drew out a little crumpled paper from his pocket, covered with pencil-notes and figures.

‘ For being tall ? ’ said Mr. Green. ‘ I read the

will through, of course, when it appeared in the "Times," but I certainly have no recollection of that qualification.'

'It warn't said in so many words, but it comes to about the same thing. "Thirty per cent. for bein' brave." Wahl, isn't that the same thing as bein' tall? Ef you was goin' to fight a man twice your size, which do you think would be the bravest?'

'I think I should be, to fight him.'

'You'd *feel* bravest, I dare say; but which do you think'd *look* bravest? Why, he would, sonny, especially at the end of the fight; an' the marks will be given for lookin', not for feelin', same as they will be given in Greek an' Lattun for sayin' and not for knowin'.

'"Twenty per cent. for outdoor sports." Wahl, ef you let alone cricket—which is a children's game on'y known in England—which of our games ain't the tall ones best in? Do they choose little men or big men for football an' rowin'? "Twenty per cent. for power to lead." Wull, did you ever know a pack of schoolboys follow a lad of four foot six when they could follow a lad of six foot four? No, *Sir*! The Rhodes Scholarship is to be given to a tall man, and

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Downy is the best qualafied man of his age for the post in Lavinia.'

The interview ended without Mr. Green coming to any decision. But Mr. Downy returned to the subject again and again; and in the end it was decided that Downy's name should be sent in to the State Education Department, as a candidate for the Rhodes Scholarship.

'Wahl, Tony Green,' said Mr. Downy, when this point was settled: 'what do you perpose to do now?'

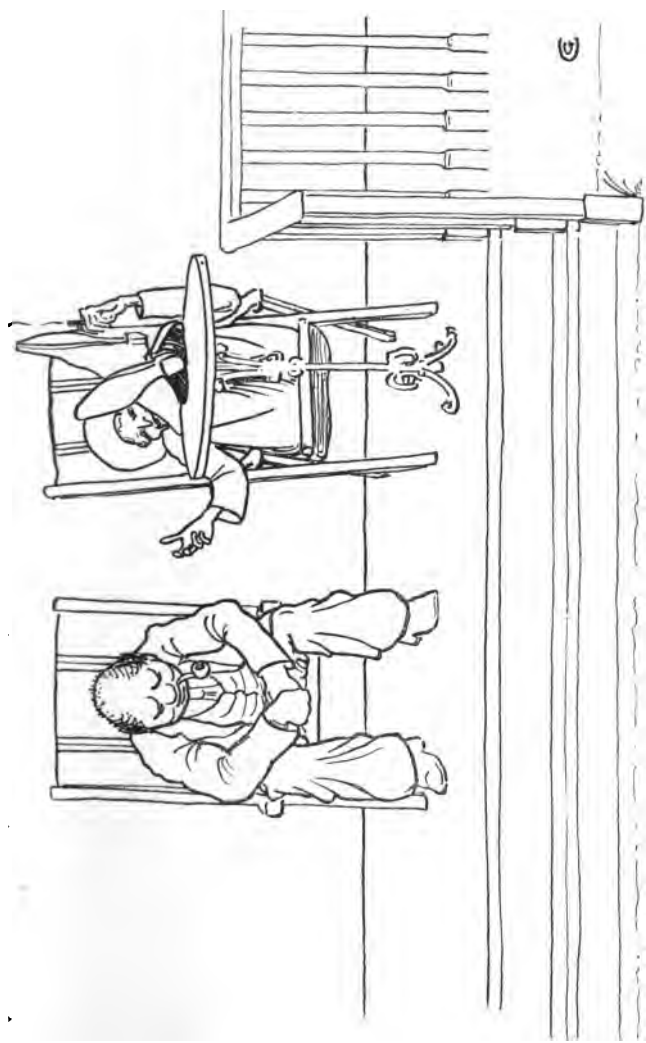
'To do? Why, nothing. I've sent in Downy's name, and all that we can do is to wait and see what comes of it.'

'That may be the British way of doin' things, Tony Green; but it ain't the custom to sit still and watch the daisies grow in the States. We must hustle around, same as at any other election.'

'Do you mean that we're to canvass for him?'

'Canvass is the word, sonny,' said Mr. Downy, blowing out a long cloud of smoke. 'You know Venner Sheldon, the Minister of Education, I think?'

'Not personally. Angelica met his wife's sister-in-law at a supper party in Chicago in '95.'



The Rhodes Scholarship is to be given to a tall man

‘That’s the same thing. Wull, see here, I and Downy will put up our glad clothes in a grip to-morrer and take the kyars for Lanuvium with five or six hunderd dollars spare boodle and a letter of introduction. We’ll know Venner Sheldon, we’ll know his wife, and we’ll get to know his friends. We’ll make a little party to the play and to supper. We’ll bunch the ladies handsomely and make ourselves ginerally pleasant. Then, over a friendly cigyar, I’ll drop a word in Venner Sheldon’s ear about our little plan for Downy. Tumble?’

‘No, Mr. Downy, no!’ said Mr. Green, rising and marching heavily up and down the veranda. ‘I will hear of no such thing! Giving bouquets to the minister’s wife, and bribing the minister with theatre tickets! No. If my boy can’t get to Oxford on his own merits, he sha’n’t go at all. I have great respect for your experience of the world and your—— astuteness; but on this point I am resolved, that no further step of any sort shall be taken to forward Downy’s candidature for the scholarship.’

And Mr. Green remained immovable on this point; he obstinately opposed all Mr. Downy’s plans for ‘advertising’ the young candidate in any way soever. And even the torch-light pro-

cession of Parkinsite Alumni, which came up at Mr. Downy's instigation to prove the young man's popularity by a surprise serenade, was turned resolutely off the grounds by Mr. Green himself. However, Mr. Green could not prevent the 'Greenopolis Rooster' from publishing an account of the procession, with full text of the unsung serenade, and a fanciful picture of Mr. Green in dressing-gown and night-cap, brandishing a big stick in the face of the leader. It was headed :

OLD MAN GREEN WASN'T TAKING ANY

CALLITHUMPIANS IN THE STILLY NIGHT

HE HAD NO TOOTH FOR DRUM-JUICE

Meanwhile other candidates had come into the field ; for, in spite of all the patriotic papers could say in disparagement of Oxford, with its 'sterile classicism' and its 'antiquated pompousness,' in Lavinia, as in every State, the attractions of 300*l.* a year and the chance of seeing the world awoke ambition in the bosoms of all the likeliest young men.

Though baulked of his desire to canvass for his grandson, Mr. Downy was by no means idle. To

Mr. Green's surprise, he found that his father-in-law was interesting himself in the candidature of two or three other aspirants. To his still greater surprise he read one morning, among the personal items in the 'Rooster,' that 'our distinguished young townsman,' Downy V. Green, had withdrawn his name from the coming competition. He wondered if he ought not to write a contradiction.

'Ain't worth contradictin',' said Mr. Downy; 'monstrous brainy, these noospaper men: nobody takes any stock in what they say.'

But the 'Rooster's' mistake proved a fortunate thing for Downy. For though at first the rival parties had contented themselves with puffing the merits of their own candidates, they soon came to decrying the nominees of their rivals. Every candidate's family history was gone into by his enemies; old scandals were raked up, old quarrels revived: this man's uncle had died of consumption; this man's grandfather had been hanged for horse-stealing; awful stories were retailed of the precocious profligacy of the rival scholars. In fact, when the time came, none of the candidates but Downy had a shred of character left. The Minister of Education had no wish to be called on to investigate the scandals raised by the candidature;

and when the Rhodes Trustees called upon him to name the year's scholar for the State of Lavinia, he gave his nomination for the only man with a reputation worth preserving, and Downy Green was duly elected.

IV

DOWNY VERDANT GREEN was now nineteen years and a few months old. He was tall, robust, and rather clumsy. His big head, short, beaky nose, straight neck-nape and heavy American chin, gave him a look of resolution and responsibility beyond his years. Like his grandfather, Sir Verdant, he was short-sighted ; and his gold spectacles, together with a natural imperturbability of countenance—which the Americans catch from the Red Indians—made him look wiser than he really was. A hero at his school, where he easily excelled in outdoor sports, and held his own in bookwork, he was an absolute child in knowledge of the world. He had never spent a night away from home ; he had never seen any company but his family circle and the townsfolk of Greenopolis ; he had never troubled his mind with any of the questions which stir the spirits of men in other places.

The only worldly art with which he had any acquaintance was that of concealing his ignorance, of never seeming to have the worst of it. This he had learnt from the constant precept and example of Mr. Jonathan Downy.

V

ONE afternoon, soon after the nomination to the scholarship had been declared, Mr. Tony Green appeared at the tea-table with a small paper parcel in his hand. When he had removed the wrappings, a slim volume, bound in green morocco, appeared. He put it on the table and laid his right hand impressively upon it.

‘Here is a book, Downy, my boy, which will, I think, interest you and Mr. Downy. It is called “The Adventures of Verdant Green,” and is a record of the doings of your grandpapa when he went up to Oxford. The book had a great vogue at one time in England, as indeed everything must which relates to so distinguished a man. I’ve always kept it under lock and key, because Papa was, for some reason, never quite pleased with it. But now that you are grown up, I think the time has come for you to read it, and know something about your English relations. I think

you will enjoy it'—he broke into a smile—'it's a most amusing book!'

'Ef it's an amoosin' book, Tony Green,' said Mr. Jonathan Downy, 'I'll jest run through it between tea and meat, while Downy is havin' his souse in the binnacle.'

'With your keen sense of humour, Mr. Downy, I am sure it will make you roar with laughter.'

When Downy came back from the river an hour or so later, he found his grandfather seated on an upright chair at a table on the veranda, with his long fingers twined in his hair—the attitude he assumed when studying anything which required great concentration. 'Verdant Green' lay before him. His face was serious and even anxious.

'Wull, sir, how is "Verdant Green"? Have you laffed much?'

'I hev not laffed much, sonny.'

'Is it amoosin'?'

'No, sonny, it is not amoosin': not any. I have studied the first few chapters of this work with considerable keer, and I have arrived at the conclusion that it was never meant to be amoosin'. Your father has made a mistake. It is what I call

grim ; and where it's not grim, it's onuntulluable.'

'Then it ain't worth readin' ?'

'It's there you're wrong, sonny. This book is a gold-mine for a young collegian jinin' at Oxford, clean pay-dirt from eend to eend. It is not an amoosin' book, but it is a clever book, the work of a malicious man, and a personal inimy of the Jedge. It presents him in a most onfavourable light: as a man who was the easy mark of every chance idiot that happened along. But it contains a keerful study of the ways an' manners of the young Britisher at Oxford, and invalable disquisitions on the institootions of the place. You and I must study this book together till you know the last almighty word of it by heart ; and we're goin' to com-mence plum now.'

They studied that book through and through, discussing every word of it, with as much care as two anthropologists digesting a missionary account of some newly discovered savages ; till Downy knew all the details of Oxford and its undergraduate life, and could answer Mr. Downy's most difficult questions on it—the right methods of addressing a Don, a Proctor, or a Scout, the proper costume for a wine, the real meaning of ' F.P.' etc., etc.

And if the Oxford of to-day had been the same as the Oxford of fifty years ago, there is no doubt that Downy might have cut a very respectable figure there upon what he had learnt with his grandfather.

VI

AFTER three or four months of waiting, Downy at last received a packet from a body of gentlemen in Washington, who informed him that on the recommendation of the Minister of Education for the State of Lavinia, they, as representatives of the Rhodes Education Fund in America, had nominated him to the Trustees of the Rhodes Fund in England, who had been pleased to approve of his appointment. That the Trustees had moreover decided that he was to join the College of St. Ives on a vacancy occurring; and that the Master of St. Ives had graciously consented to receive him, without entrance examination, at the beginning of the summer term: that he was therefore to present himself before the Master six days after the official commencement of that term, and go into residence.

Though no man of the world, Downy had his wits enough about him to be able to cross the

Atlantic without losing his way. But old Mr. Downy strongly impressed upon his son-in-law the necessity of some elder relative accompanying him on his journey to Oxford. At first Mr. Green did not see it. Mr. Downy urged the example of Sir Verdant's entry at Oxford. Mr. Green felt the force of that, and said if it must be so it must, and he would make the necessary preparations.

'But what about the works?' asked Mr. Downy; 'there's a quahntity of diffacult and dullacate questions arisin' every day, no doubt, about alkalies and freight which demand the master-mind to answer them.'

Yes, that was very true, said Mr. Green; he really didn't know *what* would happen while he was away.

'How would it answer ef I took your place?'

'At the works?' cried poor Mr. Green, aghast; the picture of a demolished boiling-shop and a crowd of gold-diggers rising before his mind.

'No, *Sir*! As the b'y's companion.'

Mr. Green was profoundly grateful for the suggestion. He wondered he had never thought of it himself.

'It'll probably mean the savin' of a few hunderd dollars of fleecin's,' said Mr. Downy. 'I'll jest

run him over, settle terms, fix him in, have a peek at the Elephant, and be back agen over the Big Drink before you can say snakes.'

The question of clothes was rightly regarded as an important one. Mr. Downy insisted that his grandson should not make himself conspicuous as Sir Verdant had by the homeliness or the inappropriateness of his wardrobe. A Chicago tailor was wired for, and Downy was duly provided with all the articles which the Book showed to be *de rigueur* in Oxford society: flowered dressing-gowns, coloured silk shirts, shaggy jackets, velvet waistcoats and pendulous cravats. Mr. and Mrs. Green, from what they had seen of the modern young man, were a little dubious about these things: they wondered if the fashions might not have changed since Sir Verdant's time; but they were soon put down by the experts.

'The most remarkable thing about the British,' said Mr. Downy, 'is that, whether a thing is good or bad, they never change it. You may lay your bottom chip that they haven't altered a button since the Jedge was up.'

At last the morning of departure came. Downy said good-bye to all his little brothers and sisters. Mr. and Mrs. Green and Downy took their places in

the barouche, for his parents were going to say good-bye on the platform. Mr. Downy came down the steps; he looked up and down the drive, as if he were in search of something.

‘ Say, Tony Green, if you hev any paternal benedictions to commoonicate to the b’y, I should recommend you to commence plum now right smart.’

‘ Time enough at the station, Mr. Downy.’

‘ Wahl, I was on’y thinkin’, ef by any chance the townsfolk got wind of the de-part, they might interfere with your privacy.’

Mr. Downy once more showed his remarkable foresight: for the words were hardly out of his mouth when the shrubbery emptied itself of a large crowd of young men, displaying a flag which announced them to be the Greenopolis Lodge of the Lavinia Sons of Freedom. In a minute the horses were unharnessed and their places taken by a rah-rah-ing crowd. Damsels in white appeared at a corner further down and pelted the family Green with flowers, and at the gate a brass band blared into ‘ Off to Philadelphia.’ And when they arrived at the station, instead of a quiet family party, Downy was the centre of a large and cheering mob; and instead of a few quiet words of farewell,

he had to listen to a passionate harangue, delivered by a local politician, mounted on a porter's truck, or 'baggage-smasher's trolly,' as he gracefully described it; in which harangue he was informed that his chief duty in Oxford was to uphold the honour of the little star-freckled gridiron, and to show the haughty English aristocracy which frequented the place that there was a haughtier Amurakan de-mocracy, way over the Brine-jug, which would whip them to a custard every time.

VII

TEN days later Downy and his grandfather alighted on the platform of the Oxford station. They drove up a long winding street, emerged into the grey-cobbled Broad, and after one or two turnings stopped before a wooden gate in a heavy arch, surmounted by the seven heraldic cats of St. Ives, on the far side of which they found piles of boxes and bicycles, belonging to newly-arrived undergraduates.

They made their way at once to the Master's house, in the front quadrangle, leaving their baggage and their cabman—who indignantly demanded another shilling—to be dealt with by the porter.

As they waited on the step of the Master's house for the door to open: 'I'm monstrous glad I came with you, sonny,' said Mr. Downy. 'There'll be a few p'int's of business to settle, an' I'm glad for you to see how these things are done by a

smart man. I've saved a quarter-plunk already over the hack. These Oxford dons are not men of business; as Cecil J. Rhodes has observed, 'they are children in commercial matters. An' ef I don't put a head on the Master the size of a punkin, my name's not Jonathan Downy.'

When the door opened they sent in their cards, and were put to wait in the dining-room. The butler said that the Master would be disengaged in a few minutes.

'I wonder now what he's engaged with?' said Downy the younger.

'Greek partacles, sonny, Greek partacles, same as when your grandpaternal the Jedge entered here. They're allus tryin' to sort them tarnation partacles out into some kind of order.'

A door opened at the far end of the dining-room, and a young man appeared with papers in his hand. Behind him came a lean cleric, giving him parting instructions in a fluty benevolent voice.

'And tell Mr. Stringer not to dispose of the Grand Trunk shares till after the dividend is paid.'

'Yes, sir; and what about the tenant at College Farm?'

‘Tell him that I hope his mother is better, and I trust it is only influenza. And add in a post-script that the College rules will oblige us to distrain if it is not paid by the tenth. *Good moorning!*——Ah! Mr. Downy and Mr. Green, I think? *How* do you do? *How* do you do? Will you come into my room?’

The Master knew all about Downy’s origin; in fact, he knew more than Downy himself about his family, for he enumerated with evident pleasure the various connections of the family by marriage in the post-Verdant generation. Mr. Downy grew impatient: it seemed as if they were never coming to business.

‘I’ll have to be puttin’ out vurry soon on the return-journey, Mr. Master. Ef you could show me a list of the rooms in College, with the prices marked, I could be choosin’.

‘*That* is all settled, my dear sir. Your grandson’s rooms have been selected long ago by the Dean.’

‘Then we can come straight to bargainin’ about the price, an’ what is to be included.’

‘Quite useless, I’m afraid. The rent is a fixed quantity, as unchangeable as the laws of arithmetic. There’ll be the usual caution money or

deposit, of course, which we may as well settle at once.'

'Come, that's business. Now, sir, as a plain man, what's your lowest figure?'

'Always the same figure, my dear sir—fifty pounds.'

'Halve it and say done?'

'Oh, there you must really excuse me. There is no bargaining about these things: they simply have to be paid, or'—he spread his hands apart, Frenchwise. 'Then, for Rhodes scholars, for our own protection, we have been obliged to institute a bond of 200*l.* in case they are prevented from finishing their three years at the College. You will no doubt stand as your grandson's guarantee? If you would kindly sign there, in the corner.'

The interview ended in Downy and his grandfather appending their names to a large number of documents, involving a large amount of money, which was to find its way into those two capacious receptacles, the University chest and the College chest.

When it was all over, Mr. Downy wiped his brow with a red pocket-handkerchief.

'Whew!—Wull, sir, I dessay your time's a valable asset. We'll be makin' tracks.'

‘I *am* a little pressed,’ said the Master, looking at his watch.

‘You’ll be wantin’ to get back to your partacles?’

‘To my——?’

‘To the study of the Greek partacles, sir.’

‘Oh, dear no, not at all. I have an engagement at three to play golf with the Warden of Gloucester. *Good moorning! Good moorning!*’

‘Wull,’ said Downy to his grandfather, as they walked back over the quadrangle, ‘I reckon Cecil J. Rhodes knew vurry little about Oxford when he said the Professors were children in commercial matters. If they’re all like the Master, they’re monstrous smart.’

‘They would be that, sonny,’ agreed Mr. Downy.

‘You’re smart yourself, Gramfer; but the Master just walked around you.’

‘You reckon? Wahl, I rather thought I hed the bulge on *him*,’ said Mr. Downy with a twinkle.

‘Why, who’d have thought of their inventin’ that bond of 200*l*.? I was just paralysed when I saw you sign it up like a lamb.’

‘That’s where I had him, sonny! Had him high and dry! Why, that bond ain’t worth a

red chip. For I hev'n't a tarnation dollar in the world but what your paternal gives me for my pocket-money !'

And Mr. Downy stopped in the middle of the quadrangle, cackling with laughter, and slapping his thighs in the enjoyment of the joke.

VIII

At the gate Downy found his luggage all perched on a truck ; and, sitting on his portmanteau, an old man in a seedy suit of black, and a battered top-hat who was busy crooning to himself, and drawing on a scrap of paper.

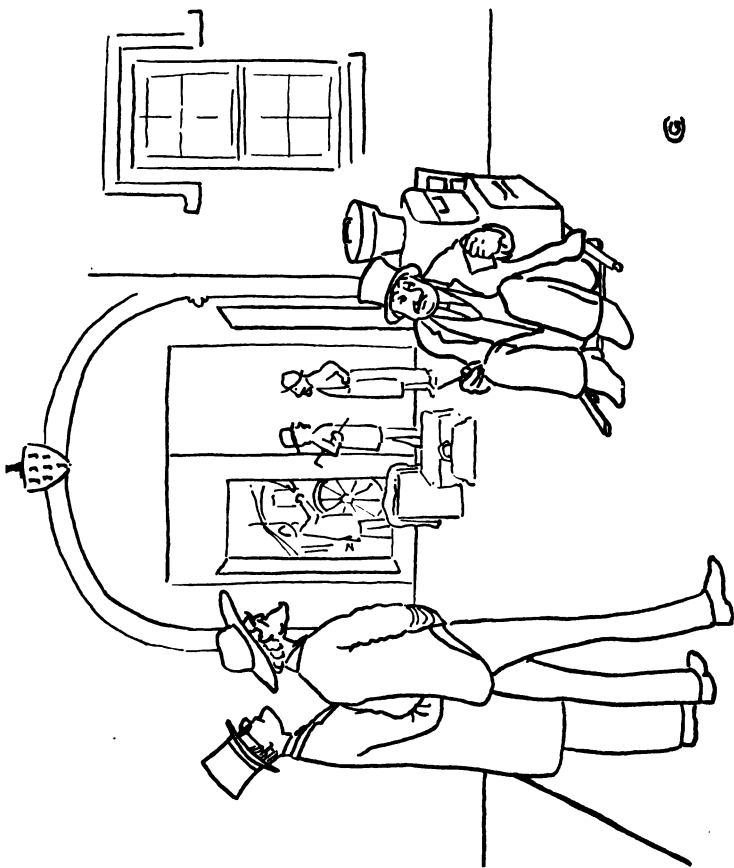
‘ And what may this individooal be doin’ here ? ’ queried old Mr. Downy, stopping in front of him.

‘ I’m jush makin’ little skesh to parsh the time, sir ; makin’ little skesh t’please my wife, sir. I’m meshenger, sir, college meshenger. Everybody knows old college meshenger.’

‘ And do your dooties include settin’ on the arrivals’ baggage ? ’

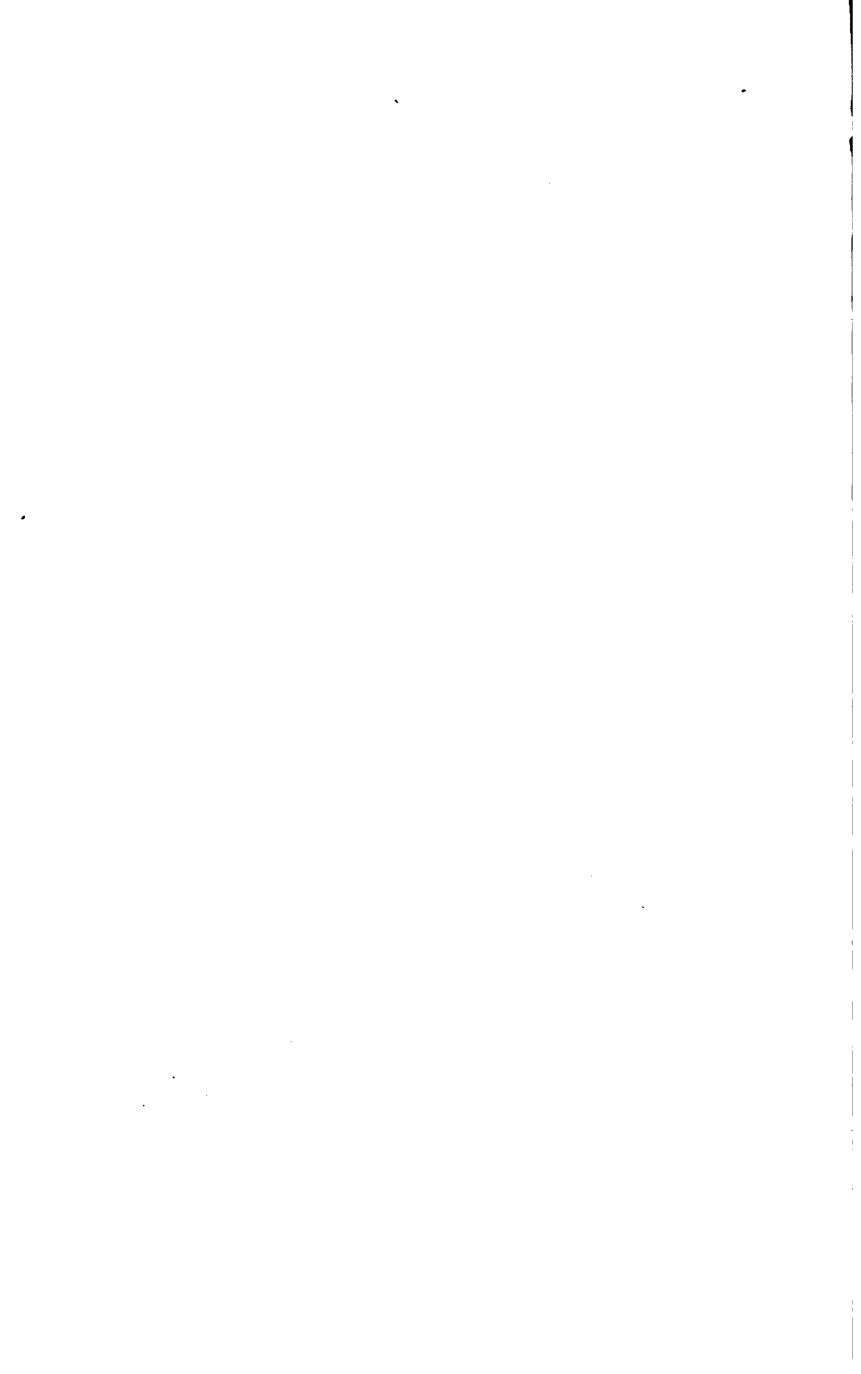
‘ Baggage, sir ? what baggage ? Dishgraceful th’ way they leave th’ baggage about. Here, porter ! porter ! Why haven’t you sent the baggage up to th’ gentleman’s rooms ? ’

The porter came out of his lodge and stood grinning with arms akimbo.



©

'What may this individooal be doin' here?'



‘Dishgraceful th’ way these college servants neglect their work,’ said the messenger, trotting busily to and fro, like the energetic clown at the circus.

‘Here, Tom, Harry, William—take this luggage to th’ gentleman’s rooms!’

A grinning underling soon started wheeling the truck over the quadrangle, with Downy and Mr. Downy walking, and the messenger trotting after it.

‘Mind th’ grass, boy, mind th’ grass,’ said the messenger; ‘why don’t you wheel it straight? This way, sir, under the arch. That’s th’ messenger’s little box in the wall. That’s the Chapel; no, that’s the ‘All; no, that’s the ‘All and that’s th’ Chapel. I get so confused with all th’ gentlemen comin’ up and nothing ready. *Mind* the step, stoopid!’

Downy’s rooms were on the ground floor of a third quadrangle, surrounded on three sides by grey crumbling stone buildings, and open on the fourth, but for an iron railing, on to a long and stately garden.

They walked into a tallish, dirtyish square room, with an undulous floor and bent walls, panelled in imitation maple. It had evidently

been furnished by a young man whose tastes were still in a transitory and unstable stage of development. A torn Kidderminster, blue stuff curtains, an embroidered mantel-hanging, garish silk lampshades ; ' Dignity and Impudence ' over the mantel-piece, flanked by ' The Soul's Awakening,' and Schmalz's ' Return from Calvary ' ; a plentiful supply of German epic subjects, represented by sleek women in scanty muslin ; and a number of photographs of child-faced actresses.

Two doors at the back of the sitting-room gave entry to a tiny bedroom and a tinier china-closet, which the messenger displayed with an air of enormous secrecy. He did the honours of the house.

' Tom Bailey ! Tom Bailey ! ' he shouted out of window for the Scout. ' These college servants are never where they ought t' be. Will you take a seat, sir ? ' He offered them chairs. ' 'Ave you seen the sights of Oxford yet, sir ? Or may I 'ave the pleasure of showin' them to you, sir ? '

' Sights of Oxford ? ' said Mr. Downy. ' And what may they be, anyhow ? '

' Oh, sir, it's *all* sights. There's Magdalen tower, now.'

' Is that a vurry high tower ? '

‘ Oh, yes, sir, very ’igh.’

‘ Is it three hunderd feet high ? ’

‘ I shouldn’t ’ardly think it’s as ’igh as *that*, sir.’

‘ Ah ! . . . Now I dessay you think your little tower no slouch of a moon-rake in Oxford, eh ? . . . Is there an ullavator ? ’

‘ A what, sir ? ’

‘ An ullavator—a liftin’ machine.’

‘ Oh, no, sir ; not since I’ve known it.’

‘ Wahl, the old shot tower at Lanuvium is three fifty, *and* there’s an ullavator. That’s good enough for me. Are there any other sights any way ? ’

‘ There’s th’ Martyrs’ Memorial, sir.’

‘ And is *that* vurry high ? ’

‘ Oh, no, sir, quite a little thing compared to Magdalen.’

‘ Then we’re not takin’ any of that neither. You keep your sights for Britishers that don’t know any better. They ain’t large enough to alarm an Amurrkan. And now you’d best be goin’ away to see that the college servants is puttin’ their work through straight.’

When they were alone Mr. Downy explained his reasons for not making the tour of the lions.

‘My business here is over, sonny, and the sooner I vamose the beef-run the better ; so I’ll not go putterin’ around the sceneries with you. You’ve gotten to stand on your own continuations here, and not look as if you was bein’ handed over with your sucker and coral complete to be took care of by your tutor. You’re a man, and the rest of the crowd are bound to know it.’

For five minutes or so they sat and meditated in a cloud of tobacco smoke. Then Mr. Downy arose and settled his jacket.

‘Wahl, sonny, it’s time I was puttin’ out for the kyars. As your paternal ain’t here, I feel as if I ought to give you a few words of partin’ advice before I tell good-bye. As that elaquent blather-skite re-marked at the Greenopolis Depot, you’re bound to uphold the honour of the States up here. Recollect you come of the conquerin’ race. Recollect we’ve taught these Britishers most everything they know : we’ve taught them how to ride their race-horses ; we’ve taught them the caucus, company law, iced drinks, and the methods of local government ; we’ve taught them three parlour dances and thirty-five new religions, and it’s we who made the Coronation the thing it was. Then there’s the Shippin’ Trust. That’s an all-fired

thing is the Shippin' Trust. You think of the Shippin' Trust if ever you're feelin' low. Never let on to these young Britishers that you don't know a thing, or that you can't do a thing. Never you let them bamfoozle you with their mule-stories like they did the Jedge.'

'That's right, Gramfer. I won't let them pull the wool over my eyes.'

'And mind you this, sonny : you ain't come over here for Greek an' Lattun alone, though they're good enough groceries in their way, an' you'd best put yourself next to what you can of them. As an Amurrkan man of business you'll hev to manage every stripe of folks. Therefore you'd best study every stripe of folks that you find up here ; mix with readin' men, ridin' men and rattin' men. *Be* each, and see what it's like. That's the way to fetch up on the front seats later on.

'An' about the professors, remember this ; if a man comes to you and says "Jine up for my lectures," don't you be taken in. Ask him how many dollars a course he charges—take the cheapest ; I reckon it's all the same Greek they teach.

'And there's 'one important thing I was monstrous near forgettin'. We made a mistake about those shirts. First thing after unpackin', *cut the*

name-tab off; for I remember hearin' now that it's a custom of the sophomores to capture that portion of the freshmen's outfit and hang them up in their rooms as scalps. Don't expose the name of Green that way.

'Wull, I'll be puttin' out: I mustn't rub the time too close. Dog my cats ef I ain't more'n half sorry to leave you! So long, honey. Don't come no further'n the stoop. You'll drop us a postal by and agen to tell us how you mosey along? So long; so long, little 'un. Keep up a good heart——and remember the Shippin' Trust.'

IX

Downy's Scout, Tom Bailey, came in soon afterwards, and unpacked his trunks; a capable, soft-voiced man of forty, who evidently knew his business and meant to make Downy comfortable; but meant, with all due respect, to do it in his own way.

'Say, Thomas Bailey, I reckon I want some kind of a grocery outfit, canned goods and what not. Now how do I set about that? Is there a College store?'

'*All* right, sir! *You* leave all that to *me*, sir. *I'll* see to that.'

'I'll be wantin' some liquor, too.'

'*I* know, sir, *I* know. Then you'll want a gown for 'All, sir.'

'A gown?'

'You can't go into 'All without that, sir. Though of course if you prefer——'

'I want to do the correct thing.'

‘Yes, sir. In case you wanted it I’ve brought a old commoner’s gown with me.’

‘A commoner’s? What’s a commoner?’

‘A commoner’s a gen’l’mán as ain’t a scholar, sir.’

‘Then it won’t do for me: I’m a Rhodes scholar.’

‘I’d wear a commoner’s gown if I was you, sir; much more convenient.’

‘But, man alive, I’m a scholar, I tell you!’

‘Well, sir, it’s just as you please, sir. But these ’ere Rhodes scholarships ain’t the same thing as a College scholarship, sir. They’re honly a private affair, of which we ’ave no official cognisance, sir.’

‘Oh, vurry well.’

‘Shall I leave the gown ’ere, sir, in case you think of wearin’ it?’

‘Yes, yes, leave it on the chair.’

‘Yes, sir.’

Tom left the room, but came back a moment later to add: ‘You won’t make any mistake in puttin’ on that gown for ’All, sir.’

X

A LITTLE before seven the quadrangle in front of Downy's rooms began to fill with men in black gowns. At seven a cracked bell rang somewhere in the upper air, and the crowd passed away through a passage on one side to go to Hall. When they were all gone, Downy followed after.

There was no mistaking the way. For when he reached the next quadrangle the noise told him the rest of the road. He went down a windy corridor, past a buttery-hatch where busy hands were putting out battered pewters full of beer, and so in at the double doors, through a hurrying crowd of serving-men. He found himself in a great hall like a church, with stained-glass windows and old panelling, decorated with coats-of-arms and long portraits of old men in robes of many colours. At the far end, on a raised dais, was a half-empty table of elderly men in evening-dress; on

the lower floor tables ran down along the hall, centre-lined with a row of glasses of toast and water—the constant ornament of Oxford tables—and surrounded by chattering undergraduates. An elderly Scout singled him out and guided him to a place at one of the tables. His arrival produced an instant *gêne* and silence over a radius of some six feet.

Before leaving his rooms he had been congratulating himself that his researches in 'Verdant Green' had ensured him against presenting a ridiculous appearance among his fellow-students. He had dressed himself as he found that his grandfather had dressed himself when a few weeks' experience had taught him the fashions of the place—in a shaggy jacket with saucer-buttons, and trousers of a three-inch check. But he began to reconsider himself when he noticed the costume of his neighbours, who were dressed in simple tweed and flannel. However, he maintained his Red Indian tranquillity of countenance, and went on with his dinner.

Thirst invading him, he remembered with pleasure that in one way, at any rate, he could show his familiarity with the manners of the place, namely, by calling for his Scout to fetch him beer.

For had not his grandfather suffered thirst until 'Four-in-hand Fosbrooke' told him that if you want to drink you must 'shout for your rascal, or he'll never wait on you'? Therefore Downy upraised his voice loudly above the murmur of conversation, crying:

'Tahm! Tahm! where are you? Get me a pot of ale; and you be P. D. Q. about it too!'

But, alas! customs have changed since Sir Verdant went to college. Quietness and decorum are now the rule. Downy's cries raised something of a scandal. There was a general hush, followed by a general hum; people stood up to look at the desperado who shouted in Hall. And Downy sat blushing in the midst, in his shaggy coat and saucer buttons, alarmed, and frowning before him.

'Oh, you'll be sconced for that, you know!' murmured a voice in his ear.

'I'd like to see the Britisher that will begin, by Heck!' said Downy, thinking it sounded ferociously like scalping.

A minute later his Scout brought him a lidded quart. pot full of beer.

'Look here, now, you rascal: I asked for a pot, not a pond!' said Downy.

‘You’re sconced,’ murmured his neighbour; ‘it’s the punishment for shouting. If you swig it all off at a gulp, then *we’re* all sconced.’

This kind of punishment sounded more like ‘Alice in Wonderland’ than anything; but Downy remembered his grandfather’s injunctions.

‘Let us irrigate!’ he murmured, by way of grace, and urged the liquor down his throat. Two minutes later a brimming quart winked before each man at table.

So Downy made his first acquaintance with the criminal code of the country he had come to.

Formality thawed, the zone of silence shrank to a point; and the real but random interest of the young Englishman in all things foreign asserted its rights. Downy spent the rest of dinner-time in answering difficult questions.

‘Which is the best college football-team in the States?’

‘Is Morgan a nice chap?’

‘Do you carry a bowie-knife?’

‘Don’t you think base-ball’s awful rot?’

‘Does the President have a good time?’

‘Is the Yale eight pretty good this year?’

‘What do you think of Chamberlain?’

‘Have you ever been a cowboy?’

‘How many three-quarters do they play at Rugger in Lavinia?’

‘Have you ever been to Klondike?’

‘Are the Yankees pro-Boers?’

‘Is that an American costume you’ve got on?’

Downy sorted them out and answered them to the best of his ability.

‘Why, yes, sir; it’s an Ameracan costume, made compulsory in our schools for the sake of dissapline. When the Professor comes out to round up his pupils for the next lecture, it enables him to detect the strays at a distance. I jus’ kep’ it on for the journey, so’s not to wear out my Oxford pantaloony before the time . . . The Yale eight is waitin’ to see what crews are puttin’ on at Henley; an’ if they find there’s anything in the first class, they’ll run over to have the beatin’s of them . . . Pierpont is an amiable feller, and intellagent enough company for an ordinary tea-sociable; but we do not reckon him any great punkins as a man of business in the States, though he has had the fortune to tumble into one or two soft things . . . Havin’ no further use for my bowie-knife, I gave it away to my little brother Jim, who is busy cuttin’ his teeth . . . Joseph Chamberlain is considered to have been fort’nit in his wife, who is an

Ameracan ; but we look upon her polacy in South Africa as a mistake.'

The conversation detained Downy's messmates in Hall beyond the usual time. Batch by batch, as the men at the other tables finished dinner, they rose and filed out ; and, last of all, the Dons at the upper table left the Hall, each with his napkin in his hand, to wind up with dessert and wine in the Senior Common Room.

'We stand up,' said Downy's neighbour. So Downy rose with the rest to watch the defile of the Dons. As the last one reached the door, he stopped, turned, and made a low bow, which the undergraduates returned with great solemnity.

'And what's all that about, anyhow?' asked Downy.

'Oh, it's an old custom, and all that sort of thing. Supposed to be bowing to the portrait of the old lady that founded the College, something or other St. Ives—the old thing in the night-cap up there. And then we bow back out of politeness don't you know.'

XI

WHEN Downy got back to his rooms after Hall, the first thing he did was to undress and put away the offending suit of clothes in the bottom of his trunk.

‘I might near put my foot in it over those clothes,’ he said to himself. ‘It was reel foolish of me and Gramfer to think everything would be the same now as it was fifty years ago.’

Then he slipped on a dressing-gown, lighted a fire, and sat down in an arm-chair to watch it burn. The undergraduates seemed to have changed in other things besides the fashion of their clothes, he meditated; they didn’t seem so almighty eager to hoax a freshman as they had been in his grandfather’s time.

‘When I came over, I thought to myself, *Fungar vice cotis*, I shall perform the office of a sharpenin’-rock; but I’m binged if at supper I didn’t come nearer to whettin’ my whittlers on *them*!’

He had not been sitting long over his fire, when there came a tap at the door, and the man entered who had been sitting next to him in Hall. He was a healthy, brown man, with a bored look on his face, not uncommon among young Oxford men who have nothing to complain of.

‘Are you busy?’ he said.

‘Just scyuglin’ over the fire.’

‘You don’t mind my coming in?’

‘Take a chair and scyugle up, my dear sir; I’m glad of company.’

‘There’s a chap out here wants to make your acquaintance.’

‘Scyugle him in.’

‘It’s only old Bill Sykes. He said he couldn’t come in without an introduction; so I thought perhaps you wouldn’t mind. Come in, Bill! Let me introduce Mr. Sykes of this College, Mr. —er—I rather forget your name?’

‘Green, sir—Downy Verdant Green, of the State of Lavinia, U.S.A. Vurry glad to make your acquaintance, sir.’

‘And now introduce me, old chap,’ said the bored man to Bill; ‘we don’t know one another yet.’

‘Let me introduce my friend, Mr. Pawling, of

this College,' said Bill; 'this is Mr. Green, of the State of Lavinia, U.S.A.'

'Vurry pleased to make your acquaintance, sir,' said Downy.

Downy and Pawling shook hands with great solemnity.

'Bill' Sykes—his real name was Thomas or Edgar, or something, at home—was a man as big as Downy himself: high-shouldered, powerful, with a round face and a mop of furious black hair. He and Downy stood and looked one another shyly in the face for some time; then Bill broke into a sheepish smile.

'You're the fresher who floored a sconce in Hall?'

'I had the emptyin' of a little mug.'

'Good old fresher! I'm the chap that sconced you, ha! ha! ha!'

And to Pawling's alarm, Bill punched Downy heavily in the chest. Downy showed no animosity, but grinned and punched him back.

'You're not a bad size for a fresher,' said Bill.

'You're a baby worth raisin' yourself,' said Downy.

Then they both laughed again, and Downy wheeled up chairs about the fire.

‘It’s not bad to get over a fire,’ said Pawling ;
‘these beastly cold evenings are such awful rot.’

Downy soon found that pretty well everything was ‘awful rot’ with Pawling : nothing satisfied him. Having filled a pipe, he pulled out a wooden match-box to light it ; when he found it was empty he grumbled :

‘Just like these College match-boxes !’

Then he squeezed it between his fingers till it broke.

‘D——d flimsy little things !’ he said, throwing it into the back of the fire.

‘What are you going to do up here ?’ said Bill to Downy.

‘Wull, I mean to do everything there is to do.’

‘Do you go in for reading much ?’

‘I do not intend to study more than nine or ten hours a day ; and the rest of my time I shall devote to indoor and outdoor sports, aquatics, intalletual pastimes and society.’

‘You’ll be rather busy, won’t you ? Can you row ?’

‘Can I not ? Why, sir, the babies in Lavinia can row before they can drink milk.’

‘What sort of rowing are you used to ?’

‘I row every sort—cockle, skin-tight, short

ship, long ship, paddler, wherry. I'm not goin' to blow, but if you can find a man in your College to pull me round, wull, I shall smile. Yes, sir, I can row.'

'I'm sorry to hear that,' said Bill.

'Are you so? Are you not an aquatic?'

'Why Bill's a Blue!' exclaimed Pawling. 'Bill's President of the St. Ives Rowing Club.'

'Do tell! Wull, I'll be proud to sling an oar in your ship if you're competin'. But why are you sorry anyhow?'

'Well, you see, you're the right figure for rowing; but if you row already, you may have such a lot to forget. I dare say you've a very good style of rowing in Lavinia, but it may be different from our style up here; and we don't so much care about a chap pulling very hard, as about his pulling in the same way as the other chaps in the boat.'

'You make me smile. That's so English! That ain't our system in Lavinia, not by a very big jugful. We don't stand on ceremony there; when the judge says "Shake!" we just shut our eyes and go it bald-headed. Wull, you'll keep a place for me?'

'Why, the fact is——' Bill blushed and

looked rather confused: 'I think our Eight is pretty well made up. But if you'll come down to the barge to-morrow, I'll take you out in a tub with some of the other chaps.'

'Barges and tubs ain't the sort of wet traffic I'm accustomed to propel; but I'll come and push a paddle with you for company.'

The conversation then rippled gently over a number of topics. Downy and his companions exchanged explanation and astonishment over many small differences between English and American ways, and Downy had frequent occasion to give vent to exclamations of surprise such as—
'Holy snakes!' 'You don't say!' 'Goll bing me!' 'How you talk!' 'Gory gee!' 'I'm dosh-burned!' 'Wahl, you kin take my hat!'

A little after eleven Bill rose from his chair and said:

'You don't know many chaps, do you? I'll go and collect a few.'

He disappeared. He soon began to appear and reappear at intervals, bringing a man or two each time. As soon as he had introduced them to 'Mr. Green of Lavinia,' he disappeared again in search of more. Some of them seemed to come unwillingly: there were sounds of scuffling at the

door, and after this the visitor would enter with a jerk, Bill behind. One little man was dropped in at the open window by Bill's brawny arms, and introduced, over the window-sill, as 'The Mighty Atom.' The Mighty Atom proceeded to sit up on the floor where he dropped, and sing 'Yankee Doodle' at the top of his voice. He took no further part in the conversation, except to roar with laughter whenever Downy came near. He evidently regarded him as something hardly human, and he was convulsed whenever he spoke.

After a time the room was full, and Bill rested from his labours.

It was lucky that Downy was a man of tough fibre, for it is a trying thing to be forced suddenly into the position of host to twenty or thirty men who know one another, but have never seen *you* before. Verdant would have fainted; Downy showed no outward sign of perturbation. But the meeting was far too large for him to sort people out into their categories. In fact, he made a hundred mistakes, talking sport to smugs, and smuggery to sporting-men; trampling on prejudices and conventions, but with such an air of good humour that nobody was hurt.

He noticed as a peculiar thing that almost

all of them began conversation with him by saying :
' You're the fresher that floored a sconce in Hall, aren't you ? '

He began to feel quite proud of the feat, not guessing that this was used only as the easiest conversational gambit, much as the weather is used in other companies.

A little man in whiskers, who was introduced as Mr. Beeby, opened on him with the usual shot :

' You are the freshman who emptied a sconce, I believe ? '

' Why, yes, sir ; I had a smile of your slumgullion in the Mealery ; but it was rather shorter for a long drink than what I've bin accustomed to at home. '

' I'm sorry to hear that, very sorry, ' said the youth ; ' it was a bad example for the Scouts. I am sure Mr. Rhodes never dreamed that his money would be spent upon that sort of thing. '

' Are you an inimy of ale ? '

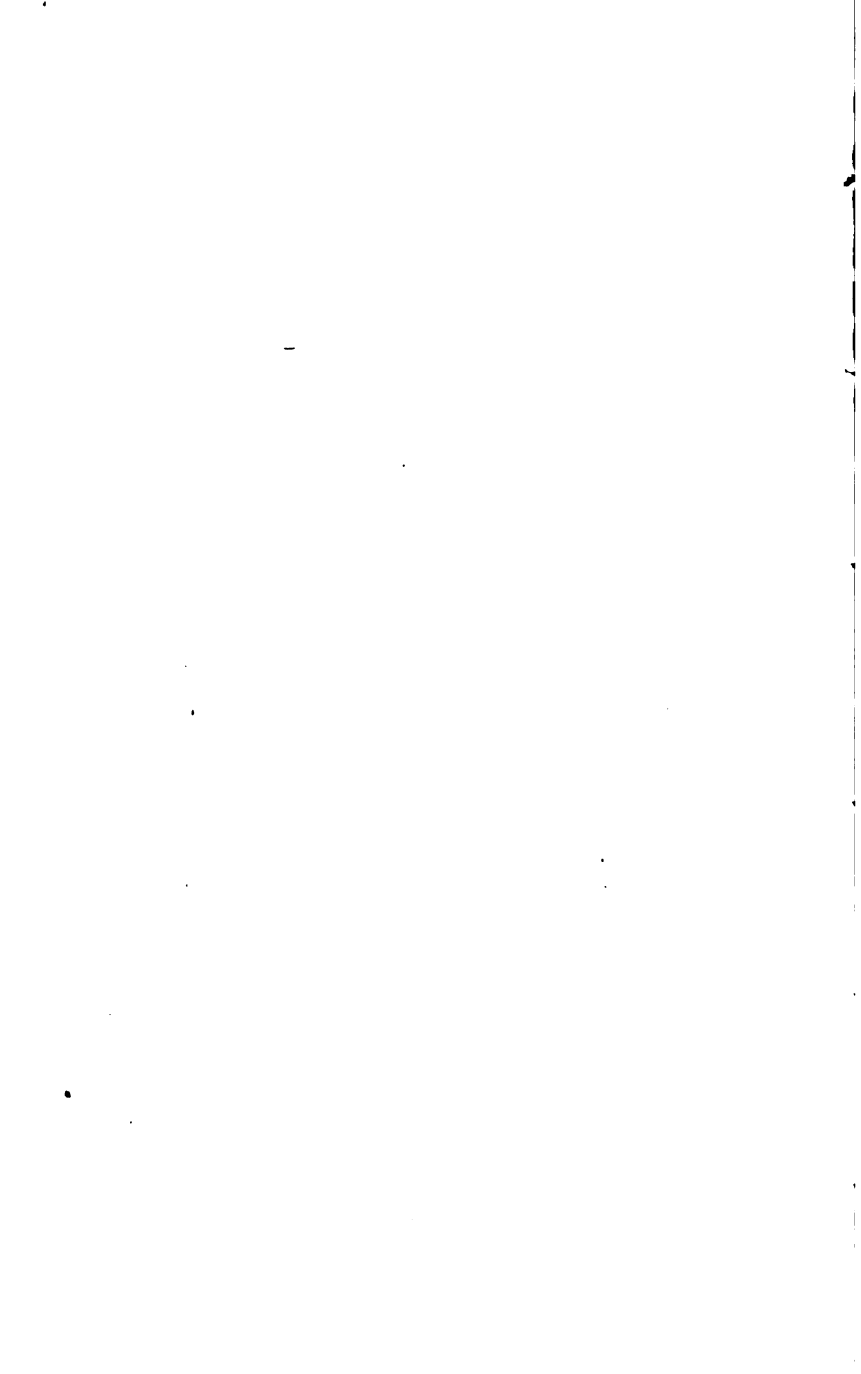
' I have never touched a drop of it since I was born. '

' You must have a powerful crowd of squandered droughts on your mind. '

' Will you take this little card ? It will admit you to the Intercollegiate Intercessional Union. '



Beeby



Come on Friday, and we will have a special meeting for your sake. We like an object.'

'A prayin'-bee with me as It? Not if I know myself! No, sir; it's too central for me.'

'If you stay away we shall intercede for you all the more.'

'Don't threat me; I can stand more liquor'n you think.'

But Downy had no time to spare for temperance discussions with his guests; his attention was demanded by the far more urgent task of furnishing them with drinks. Tom, the foreseeing Scout, had laid in a plentiful supply of whisky and soda. The hum of conversation was broken ever and anon by the roar of the siphon and Downy's invitation to drink couched in the many various ways which are admitted by the American language, such as:

'Will you worry?' 'Will you smile?' 'Will you snort?' 'Will you irrigate?' 'Will you drive a nail?' 'Will you sling a little bug-juice?' 'Will you strike a flash of forty-rod?' 'The Quick and the Dead for you, sir?' 'A little stagger-juice?' 'A little rag-water?' 'What's the matter with a leg-stretcher?' 'Will you brace yourself up with a snifter?' 'One more smile for

Lanniap !' 'One more snort for Brawtus !' 'Do as I do !'

Soon after midnight the party broke up. Bill went last, and, before he went, engaged Downy to a 'Freshers' Brekker' the next morning.

'Ham-doin's with the juniors?' said Downy. 'I'll be turrable pleased.'

XII

NEXT morning Downy got up in good time and went over to chapel at eight. The rules of chapel attendance are not so strict nowadays as they were in Sir Verdant's time—three chapels a week are required, evening chapels reckoning as a half—and the building was not more than a quarter full. He was surprised at the rapidity with which the service was put through; by dint of each side running over the other in alternate verses of the Psalms the whole thing was over in eight minutes, and the chaplain trotted home to his breakfast.

As Downy was crossing the quadrangle he was met by the Messenger, who looked, in the fresh morning air, a trifle less troubled by the confusion of the general arrival. He put a note into Downy's hand, saying :

‘From the Dean, sir.’

‘From the Dean, eh?’

The Dean informed Downy that he had asked Mr. Harding to be his tutor, and that

Mr. Harding consented. Would Downy please present himself in Mr. Harding's rooms, 5c Hall Quadrangle, at 9.30. And at 10 he would be obliged if Mr. Green would come and see him himself, and go with him to the Old Schools for Matriculation ; gown and white tie.

'Ef you'll jest mosey round with me to my rooms,' said Downy, 'I'll send him an answer.'

On arriving at his rooms he was rather puzzled as to how to address the Dean, but decided that 'Your Reverence' would meet the case. He told him he would be delighted to join him at ten with a view to securing his *admittatur*. He addressed the note to 'The Very Rev. the Dean,' and went off, contented, to Bill's rooms for his 'Freshers' Brekker.'

He found Bill plunging about in a state of nudity on a string-and-pulley machine fixed to the wall.

'Hullo !' said Bill, squaring up at him. 'Make yourself at home while I have my tub ; I won't be a jiffy.'

Bill was evidently a person of great method ; his rooms had the air of a museum, for most of the articles adorning them bore little labels, showing the history attached to each. Over the mantel-

piece on one side was a portrait of a square-jawed ruffian, signed 'Yours truly, Jem Bunce,' with a label: 'Ex-champion, who broke my nose in practice at Clifton, April 5, 1895.' On the other side was a portrait of a bishop in lawn-sleeves, with a label: 'Bishop of Launceston, who confirmed me, June 6, 1895.' Underneath was a photograph of a road over a heath, labelled: 'Spot where I was bitten by an adder, August 17, 1889'; and the adder was stuffed and labelled in a glass-case below. A cabinet portrait of an old gentleman in cap and gown was ticketed 'Rev. J. P. Rawdon, who proc-torised me three times in February, 1900.' On the walls were one or two oars with a painted record on the blade; and in the corner was a piece of an old racing-boat, doing duty as a bookshelf.

Scouts soon arrived bearing piles of tin-covered dishes, which they heaped up in the fire-place. The morning paper had not yet come, so Downy amused himself with the only two weeklies that were in evidence, the 'Pink 'Un' and the 'Church Times.'

Bill reappeared, and the guests arrived soon after in a body—very shy and quiet; they had collected in the quadrangle, to give themselves corporate courage. The first part of breakfast passed

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in almost complete silence ; every plate was passed round the table before it found anyone brave enough to keep it. Even Bill looked troubled, and could find no topic. Downy was the first to begin a regular conversation.

‘It’s a wonderful place, by Jelly, is Oxford. You English gentlemen arrivin’ here from variously located parts of the country must feel fair cowed when you think of all the famous men who have lived in this little town before you.’

No one offered to interrupt his monologue.

‘You must feel a thrill in your bones when you say to yourselves, “I’m walkin’ the streets which John Ruskin has walked ; I am livin’ on the vurry same ward as has once contained Arnold, Froude, and Newman.”’

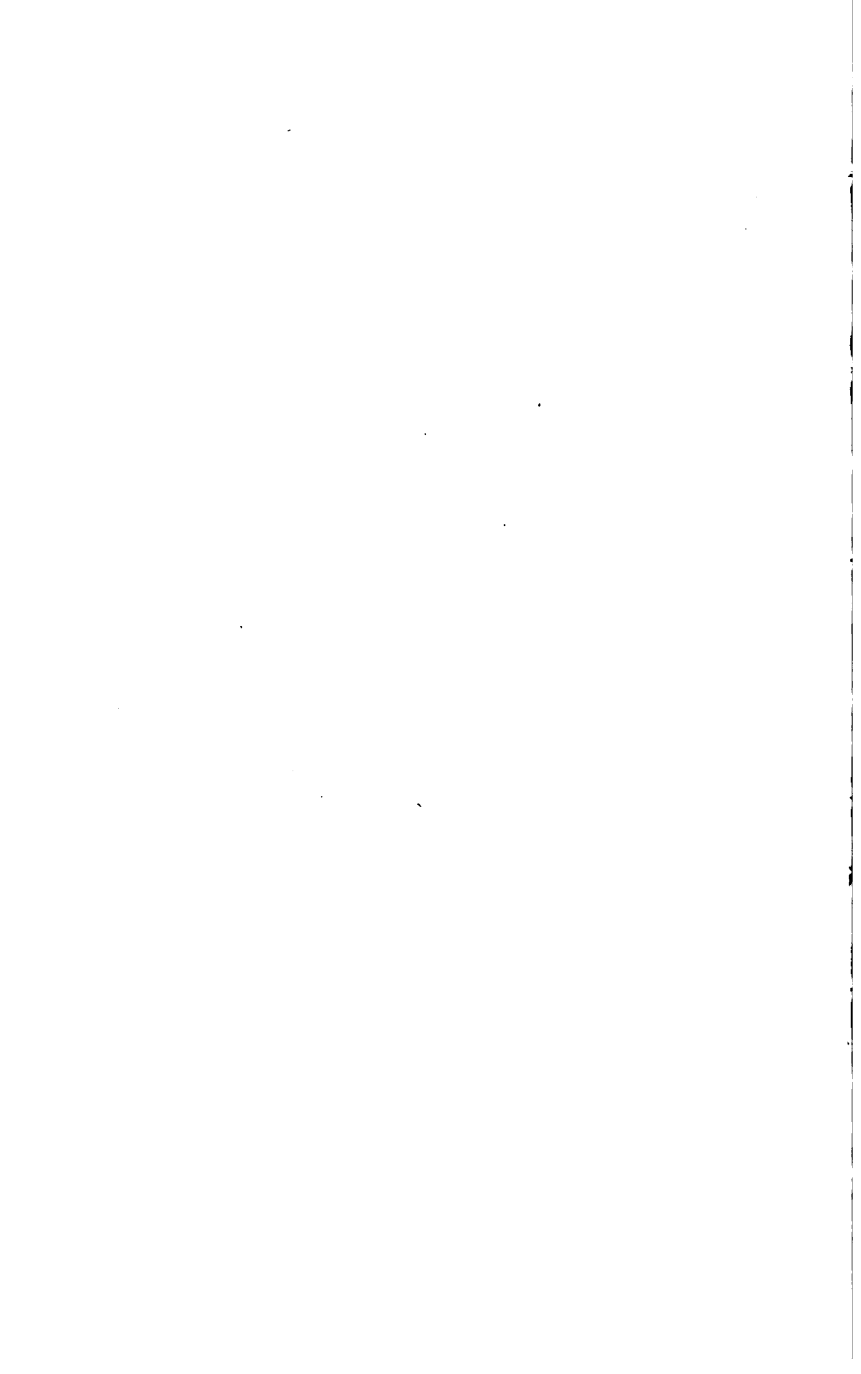
If the freshmen felt any thrill in their bones they showed no sign of it in their faces. They looked blankly at Downy without the least symptom of enthusiasm.

‘I would give a thousand dollars,’ said Downy, ‘to have been up here with Newman !’

None of the undergraduates looked as if he would have given a Greek Grammar for it. Only one of them showed signs of life ; he cleared his throat and moved uneasily in his chair for a few moments.



'Which Newman?'



‘Which Newman do you mean?’ he asked.

‘Why, Newman, sir; *the* Newman.’

‘Do you mean W. G. Newman who fielded point, or T. P. Newman who broke the roof of the pavilion in the M.C.C. match?’

All the freshmen glared at Downy.

‘Neither, sir, neither; Cardinal Newman, the eminent divine!’

‘Never heard of him!’ said the bold freshman, and went on with his egg.

‘Never heard of him!’ echoed two or three others; and a short silence ensued.

‘Wahl,’ said Downy, ‘that beats the bugs!’

But though Downy’s conversational opening led to nowhere, it had served to break the ice. A general thaw set in. The mention of the two famous Newmans led to the mention of a host of other men of fame.

‘Did you know Trevethick at Charterhouse?’ asked Bill of the bold freshman.

‘Rather! Old Trevvy! At least, of course, I didn’t *know* him; he was an awful swell.’

‘Wasn’t F. O. Smith a Charterhouse man?’

‘Yes, rather! Did you see what he did against Essex?’

‘Splendid!’

‘Made another century, didn’t he?’

Roars of laughter all round the table; everybody wide awake and interested now.

‘F. O. make a century! Oh, that’s grand!’

The joke was immensely appreciated, though it was darkness to Downy.

‘You’re mixing him up with O. F. Smith!’

‘F. O.’s the left-handed lobber!’

Renewed laughter.

The conversation ran its course over several initials and a few names, familiar to everybody but Downy. He didn’t like to be left out.

‘These gentlemen you are talkin’ of, are they also celebrities?’

‘Everybody knows ’em!’

‘Now that’s a curious thing, and vurry interesting to me as an Amurrkan; for it’s the first time I ever re-member to have heard their names.’

Well I’m blowed! You’ve heard of C. B.?’

‘Why, yes, sir; I believe he leads a section of your Liberal ticket?’

Roars of laughter.

‘Not he!’

Downy never found out who C. B. really was; nobody thought it worth while to explain.

Breakfast being finished, the company scattered

about the room and blew down cigarettes. Bill was at the window.

‘Hullo, Tommy!’ he shouted to a man who passed across the quadrangle in a mortar-board—a thin, fair, stooping man. ‘How goes it?’

The fair man only grinned nervously over his shoulder and went on.

‘Silly smug!’ said Bill. ‘I suppose he’s going to come the thingamy over us now.’

‘Who’s that?’ said Downy.

‘Only old Tommy.’

XIII

Downy made his farewells, saying that he had to go and see his tutor. Having put on a white tie and black gown he sallied forth in search of 5c Hall Quadrangle.

He entered a neatly, sparsely furnished sitting-room, the chief decoration of which consisted in a number of gilt-back books, arranged in rows on the shelves. He looked round, expecting to see a portly person in a gown awaiting him. There was nobody there but 'Tommy,' thin and sickly-smiled, on the hearth-rug.

'This young feller's got an appointment with Mr. Harding for the same hour,' thought Downy.

But Tommy was not going to ignore Downy as he had ignored Bill.

'How do you do?' he said, extending a moist and lifeless hand, palm uppermost.

'Fair to middlin', thanky,' said Downy, giving the lifeless hand a shake; 'how do you come along yourself?'

'These *are* Mr. Harding's rooms, ain't they?' said Downy, when the hand had been withdrawn.

'Ye-e-es,' said Tommy; 'of course they are.' He seemed to be struggling with some emotion.

'Oh,' said Downy. 'You bin long at St. Ives?'

'A good time,' said Tommy; 'about six years.'

'Oh,' said Downy; 'that's a long time to be foolin' around after a certifacate. You must have hed rather a cornery time in the examination-rooms.'

Tommy made no answer but a little shuffling of the feet. He was evidently nervous; his brow was dewy with it.

'You must know a good deal about the tutors of the College?' said Downy.

'Of course I do, but——'

'So you ought. Are they an honest lot?'

'What do you mean, sir?'

'Are they quite square?'

'Really your questions!'

'Not at all. I thought you might help me with your experience of the place. You see it's this way. The Very Reverend the Dean writes me and says, "Go to Mr. Harding: he's consented to be your tutor." Very kind of him to consent; but what about me? That ain't my way of doin'

business, not by many parasangs. This Mr. Harding, now, what are his qualifications ?'

'Do you know who you're talking to, sir ?'

'I hev'n't an idee.'

'I *am* Mr. Harding.'

'Go West, young man, go West ; I don't believe you.'

'But I tell you I *am* Mr. Harding !'

'Swim out !'

'“Swim out !” What do you mean, sir ?'

'Tell that to the marines. No, *Sir* ! They played off that game in my Gramfer's time ; they pulled the wool over the eyes of the juvenile sheep in those happy old, hairy old days ; they dressed up and examined them and plucked them and all manner of monkey-business. But you'll not come the gum-game over Downy V. Green of Lavinia. You've woken the wrong passenger this time.'

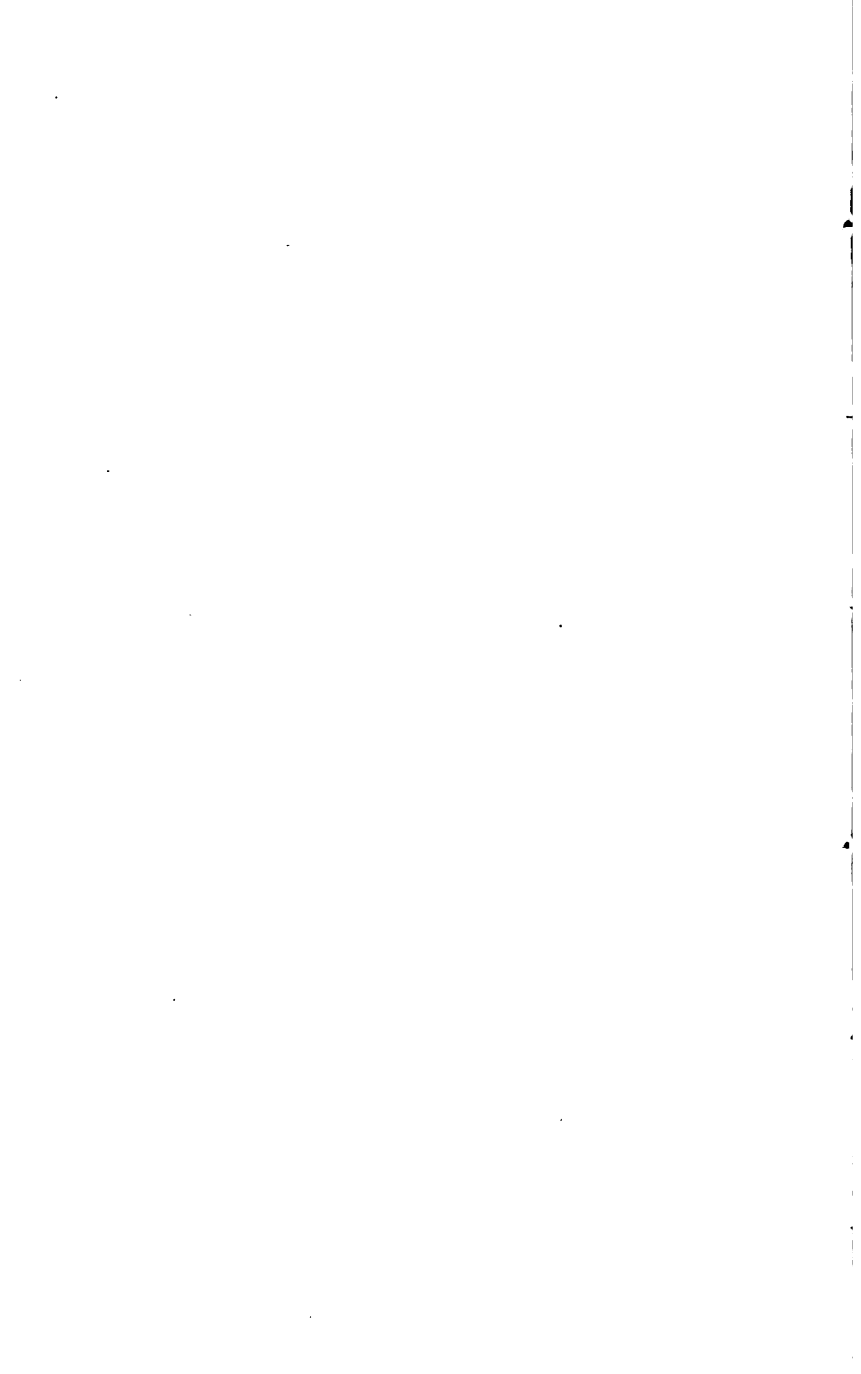
'Leave the room at once, sir ! I'll not stand your vulgar language and impudent demeanour ; I shall report you for your insolence. Leave the room !'

'All right, sonny, I'm on the mosey. So long. Tell Mr. Harding I came, if you see him.'

And Downy sauntered forth in search of the Dean's rooms, congratulating himself that if the



Tommy



students mistook him for an easy mark, they'd find they were barking up the wrong tree.

A Scout showed him the Dean's abode in the next quadrangle. He found the Dean very different from what he had expected—there was nothing clerical about him; he was a small, square, strong man of about forty, with a great shaven jaw and penetrating black eyes. He shook Downy's hand in a firm grasp, and examined his face.

'Green?' he said.

'That's me.'

'We must be starting for the Schools; come along.'

They talked as they went.

'Have you been to see Mr. Harding?'

'I went, but he wasn't in.'

'H'm! very curious! Nobody there?'

'There was a young feller there, a vurry humorous feller, who tried to scyugle me *he* was Mr. Harding.'

'What was he like?'

'He was a slimsy boy, with a kink in his chest.'

'Had he a moustache?'

'He had a design for one. It wasn't *him*, if you mean that; it was on'y a young feller they call Tommy.'

The Dean threw up his head and roared.

‘I hope you were gentle with him!’

‘I allowed he was a liar.’

‘*You’ve* made a fine morning’s work of it!’

‘As how?’

‘That *was* Mr. Harding—Thomas Harding, Hertford Scholar, Ireland proxime, Greats. first, and Fellow of St. Ives.’

‘You’ll make me smile! Bottom truth? You snum? That child? Excuse me; I’m goin’ to prance right back and apologise.’

But the Dean held him tight; he told him to get his matriculation over and write a note afterwards. So Downy cooled down.

They found the long hall in the schools already dotted with groups of freshmen, each group shepherded by its Dean. The Vice-Chancellor and the Proctors soon entered and enthroned themselves at the upper end. There was a little reading done in a low tone by a robed official; then the Deans marched up their men, who received collective blessings from the Vice-Chancellor and individual presents of the University Statutes from another official. After this the ceremony ended in signing a number of books. There was nothing very alarming about it, though one stout Hindoo from

Balliol fainted with emotion, and had to be carried up the Hall by main force and deposited, weeping, at the Vice-Chancellor's feet.

After matriculation the Dean took Downy back to his own rooms.

'I've changed my mind about your tutor,' he said; 'you'd be rather a handful for Mr. Harding. I'm going to take you myself.'

A few questions elicited the facts that Mr. Parkin was one of the finest scholars in the States, and his school was reckoned on about the same level as the Johns Hopkins University; that Downy had pretty nigh exhausted the Greek and Latin literatures; that he had, however, read only two books of Homer, knew no Herodotus, Æschylus, Aristotle, or Plato, and had never read any Latin authors but Ovid and Cæsar.

The Dean told him, somewhat to his chagrin, that he had better take a pass if he wanted to finish in three years; he advised him to spend the next few weeks in looking about and shaking down, and not to start with impracticably large resolutions of study.

'And, by-the-by,' he added, as Downy went out, 'you needn't address me as "The Very Reverend" in future; plain "Dean."''

On getting back to his rooms Downy wrote a note of apology to Mr. Harding, which he thought would have softened the heart of a rock. But Mr. Harding was evidently not easy to soften ; for as Downy started for the river, after lunch, he found him outside the gates, preparing to mount a bicycle.

‘Wull, Mr. Harding,’ he said genially, and even paternally, ‘are you goin’ for a little ride on your jerky?’

But Mr. Harding, instead of answering, departed precipitately, hopping away with one foot on the step of the bicycle, and hopped himself right out of sight round a corner without vouchsafing a word.

‘Wull, if you ain’t the rancorousest little serpent topside dirt!’ murmured Downy to himself, and went on his road.

XIV

HE was caught up in the High Street by Bill and another, which was lucky, as he hadn't a notion of the way. When he reached the Isis he found that the barges were not the vessels he was expected to propel, but were a long row of stable houseboats, lining the Oxford side of the river.

Everything by the waterside was busy. The barges hummed with life. The river was covered with boats of every size, and more kept putting off from the rafts moored alongside the barges.

Bill was off at once, steering a 'tub,' or narrow two-oared outrigger, in which the members of the College Eight received individual tuition. Downy waited on the St. Ives raft with a number of others watching the scene and listening to discussions on the merits of the boats that passed: one crew had no legs, another one hung, another sugared, another bucketed. He soon learned that the instructions of Dons are not confined to the lecture-room; for

there was his own Dean whirling along the towpath, over the way, on a bicycle, and roaring through a speaking trumpet at the Varsity crew.

‘Tubbing’ was over at last. Bill came aboard.

‘Well, let’s get the eight out.’

Sammy the waterman drew up the eight from its place of safety; an immensely long and fragile vessel of matchboarding, about fourteen inches wide, with sliding-seats and long spidery rowlocks.

‘Where’s Rowden?’ asked Bill, looking round.

‘Not come down yet.’

‘Had to go and see the Proctor.’

‘Well, we can’t wait. We must put in a make-shift.’

‘Barlow’s here.’

‘He’s too light for five.’

‘Ef you’re afraid of your party bein’ spiled,’ said Downey, ‘I’m willin’ to oblige.’

Bill looked at him doubtfully. Bill, by-the-by, was a kind of awful stranger down in his own water-side kingdom; as aloof as an admiral.

‘Have you ever rowed in this sort of boat?’

‘It’s a bit wider’n I’m used to,’ said Downy, eyeing the slender craft; ‘but I kin spread out.’

‘Well, we’ll give you a try: we can’t do more than drown.’

But the Eight were not destined to die that day. The crew got in, and Downy approached the vacant place. He looked with astonishment at the little seat and felt it with his hand: it slipped backwards and forwards.

‘Holy snakes, it’s loose!’ he exclaimed. ‘Say, Sam, can you loan me a screw-twister?’

‘What on earth for?’ roared Bill.

‘My seat’s all wiggly.’

Bill got out again, and he and the waterman examined the seat carefully.

‘It’s all right,’ they agreed.

‘Haven’t you ever been on a sliding-seat before?’ asked Joe.

‘Born an’ bred on a slidin’ seat,’ said Downy, indignantly. ‘But this is a pattern I ain’t used to; in Lavinia we have ’em slidin’ side to side, to prevent the boat from rollin’.’

‘Well, you’d better stay on the barge till we’ve got a new boat fitted with the Lavinia gear. Come along, Barlow!’

So Downy was left lamenting.

‘Blamed fool I was to let on!’ he said to himself.

However, Bill took him out later in a tub, and gave him hopes of his future.

‘You see, you haven’t learnt enough about rowing to be spoilt yet.’

A man of Downy’s avoirdupois was not to be despised, and Bill devoted much time and trouble to his education.

XV

AFTER a week or so Downy had mastered a few out of the hundred and twenty-eight points of good rowing, and was so far advanced in his studies that he was admitted to the honour of being 'tenth man in the Eight,' or having the hope of rowing if two of the crew succumbed to the austerities of training.

He had to train no less rigorously than the rest ; and this proved to be an absorbing occupation, taking much of his time and all his vigour. A three-mile walk at seven ; a heavy meal at 8.30 ; running with the boats in the afternoon ; no smoking ; no unauthorised drinking. Every night the Eight had dinner at a separate table in Hall, with extra raw beef to eat, and extra strong beer to drink. After Hall they assembled in one another's rooms to sip port and eat oranges. Bill, for the better entertainment of his men, provided them with part-songs ; and they used to pass their evenings in bellowing out 'The Chough and Crow,'

My little one sleeps,' and other old English ditties, with the Mighty Atom, who coxed them, as alto—while the rest of the College assembled in the quadrangle outside and hooted. Great was the public joy one night, when Bill had pitched the key too low and the chorus had come to grief, at hearing Downy's voice upraised, saying :

' You're takin' it too shaller, Brother Bill.'

However, Downy's rowing days did not last long. He showed such an obstinate preference for the Lavinia style of oarsmanship, in spite of all Bill's arguments, that he had to be dismissed from his supernumerary post as hopeless.

' You see, it's very likely we'd do a lot of bumping on your style,' said Bill ; ' but the fact is, I'm afraid the rest of us haven't got time to learn it before Eights week.'

So Downy had what he described as ' the grand bounce.'

XVI

WHILE Downy was sitting in his rooms, one afternoon, over a pot of tea, he had a visit from an American, who introduced himself as Mr. Chadbank Cheney, of Pusey College. Downy soon knew all about him: he had done three years at Harvard, and had come up with a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford to take a special course in Comparative Philology.

‘We’ve bin up more’n a month now; it’s taken some time settlin’ in.’

‘Is there more than one of you then?’

‘My father’s jined, too.’

‘Your father?’

‘Yep; he’s always wanted to do something in the education way; he niver hed time whin he was a boy. It’s rather late, of course, but he jined so’s to keep company with me and my sister.’

‘What, have you a sister up, too?’

‘Yep, sister’s up at one of the hen-roosts. She’s

always had a leanin' to science—chemistry and fogos of every sort. Livin's cheap at Pusey, so I pushed in there. I thought there might be some religious difficulty about my bein' Evangelical; but they allowed they saw no harm in an Evangelical, so long's he wasn't an Anglican Evangelical. Father's takin' a cottage course—he's unattached; he on'y wants a pass. Sister's at St. Monica's. My mother's not jinin'—she don't approve of the curriculum; she's in rooms on St. Giles's.'

'Then your mother's here too?'

'Yep; you see she's handy for St. Edmund's, where we've put Piram to school.'

'Are you *all* here?'

'Yep; we brought the whole caboodle along. We calcalated that 1,500 dollars was rayther more'n one man could cleverly spend by himself in a year; so we determined to spread it around through the famaly. We realised; and here we are.'

Then they discussed the life of the place.

'We've bin glad to get here early,' said Mr. Cheney, 'so's to see the bones of the place before the stoodents put in. We've done the Museum, and the slums, and the Library, and the Indian Collection, and the Hospital. Then we've bin inspectin' the professors, gettin' a few details on

their private life and all that ; Paw's correspondin' for one of our papers at home.'

'And what do you make of the stoo-dents?'

'I've bin a bit pixilated by the stoo-dents. When I first fetched up in our Junior Common Room for a mug of tea and found a lot of them there, I thought, "You *are* a pack of superfine quality cards with extra stiff backs." And so they were : pink, but proud. They sot there, not sayin' a word among themselves, but just "Sugah, please sah," and the like. They all call one another "sah." But the rools of the game don't seem to apply to strangers ; for when I started talkin' a bit on my own, out at the chandelier, they gathered slowly around and listened in the most loquacious way. "Have you any rabbits in Ameraca?" says one. "Do you presarve much?" says another. "We did when we was in the grocery line," says I. "Air you attached to the nigger ullament?" says another. "Is there much pork in Chicago?" says another ; and so on, and so on. We had a tolerable lively spell of conversation. And since that I'm favourites with half the boys. But all the time I go on seein' them cuttin' one another as dead as sheepmeat in the College yard.'

Clothes came under discussion. Cheney knew what Downy was only dimly aware of, that the prevailing fashion in Oxford was one of almost ostentatious simplicity.

‘I’ve been hevvin’ a talk on wear with one of the leadin’ men up at Pusey,’ said Cheney ; ‘and I find that his observations are correct. “All-round jackets of the Norfolk build,” he says, “are principally worn, with flannel pantaloons and an eight-day shirt. Biled rags,” he says, “are on’y worn by freaks.”’

Their conversation was interrupted by another visit. The door opened, after tapping, to admit a small, slender, elegant, yellow-haired man ; not big, but a distinctly good imitation of the Greek-god type of the lady novelists, on a small scale. Everything about him was neat and pretty.

‘I’m awfully sorry,’ he said. ‘I didn’t expect to find you in ; I was coming to call. My card.’

Downy read it.

MR. DOLLY BUMPUS

Kaloikagathoi Club.

Pontius College, Oxford.

‘Come in, sir,’ he said : ‘rest your hat and put yourself level on a chair.’

‘Our mutual friend, Mr. Sykes,’ said Mr. Bumpus, ‘thought I might venture to call.’

‘You’re vurry welcome.’

‘I always make a point of knowing all the lions, which, of course, includes Rhodes Scholars now.’

‘Indeed? Then you’ve tumbled into quite a menagerie. This is Mr. Cheney, Rhodes Scholar of Pusey.’

‘Really, I’m very fortunate,’ said Mr. Bumpus. ‘I hope you’ll excuse my not coming sooner. I’ve been so awfully busy. Really one can’t call one’s soul one’s own in the summer term. I was lunching to-day at the Marmaduke with some Joseph’s men, and since then I’ve been obliged to pay a number of calls. Do you belong to the Greens of Warwickshire?’

‘No, sir; but my father did.’

‘How very nice! a most respectable family. We are all so interested in the American scholars: such a thing for the two countries. Wonderful man Mr. Rhodes. Very well connected too, through the Suffolk branch. We were rather alarmed at first at the idea of Oxford being flooded with a number of Americans; though there are some very good families of course in the States, especially

in the South. But we've determined to take you on your own merits. No doubt you're overwhelmed with invitations ?'

'Why no, sir, I've not been swamped to any great extent.'

'Oh, you wait a little while ! You're going to be quite the fashion—for a term or two. I hardly dare ask it, but if you and Mr.—, if your friend and you *would* come to Pontius to-night as my guests at the Amontillado Club, I should be perfectly charmed. It's the oldest Wine Club in Oxford. You'll meet a number of nice men.'

'Nice quiet men, hey, Mr. Bumpus ?'

'Oh dear, yes ! Only the *best* men are ever asked to the Amontillado, so it's really quite a compliment. There will be some other foreigners too : a Russian Prince, and a Frenchman who, I hear, is *de-lightful*.'

Downy and Cheney were glad of the chance of seeing a new side of Oxford life, and cordially accepted the invitation. It was arranged that they should go after Hall, as Cheney had a friend dining with him at Pusey.

Mr. Bumpus rose and made his farewells.

'You'll excuse the question,' said Cheney : 'I know so little of the customs of the place. What

kind of toggery does one put on for this sort of thing?'

'Oh, just the usual thing: white tie, evening coat, and all that.'

'Wahl,' said Cheney, when the door had closed behind Mr. Bumpus, 'it's downright astonishin', the ways of these folks. Fancy a lot of collegers all puttin' on their claw-hammer jackets and what-not to take wine together! After what I'd bin hearin' too about their gorgeous simplicity. My! I'm mighty glad I asked, or I'd have gone creatin' a scandal in their highly respectable society.'

Downy looked at him with a pitying eye.

'Wahl, sir, ef you ain't the easiest fruit! Do you think that feller was serious?'

'He looked mighty serious.'

'You didn't see him twinklin'?''

'Nary a twinkle.'

'Wull, that was just nothing but shenanigan—just poppy-cock. Did you ever read a book called "Verdant Green"?''

'I'm not acquainted with it.'

'I was jus' wantin' to laff all the time, at seein' how that young linguister was pullin' your limb. Verdant Green was my Gramfer, distinguished in his time as an easy mark. That was one of their

monkey-games. It's all in the Book, almost word for word. See here! They asked him to a wine, "to meet a few nice, quiet, hard-workin' men. . . . I suppose you'll go properly dressed—white tie, kids, and that sort of thing." Wull, he pictured to himself a nice quiet, jimmy little sort of a Dorcas milk-sociable, diversified with conversation on the antiquities of Athens and a discussion of the odds on the dogs of the College for yankin' the Greek biscuit. This picter represents what he found. Now, do you see? This is the sort of way to go—coloured silk shirt, open at the collar, streaky pants, and dressin'-gown or short jacket.'

'Sakes alive! Wull, I'm glad you were here to put me right.'

'And the conversation, you will find, does not cling about the antique.'

'It would have bin a sight easier,' said Cheney, 'if it *had* been claw-hammers; for I hev all that sort of thing handy. I'll be rather put about.'

But upon racking his mind, he remembered that among the family property there were sure to be a few odds and ends of *vaquero* costume, which his father had picked up when he was in Mexico; and it was decided that he should put something together out of them.

XVII

AFTER Hall the two Americans met in Downy's rooms. Downy followed the picture. Cheney had arrayed himself in a snake-skin jacket, flowing buff-trousers, tucked into top-boots, a cow-puncher's hat, and a scarlet sash.

'Wull, if you don't look the 18-carat desperado!' said Downy, lost in admiration.

'Quite the Greaser, eh?'

Cheney wrapped himself in a broad *poncho*, and so our two freshmen wended their innocent way to Pontius.

'Say, Janitor, which are Mr. Bumpus's rooms?'

'2A First Quad,' said the porter. 'Excuse me, sir, but the Amontilliadoes is meetin' there to-night.'

'I dare say; but I didn't ask you.'

On the landing they found a Scout.

'Mr. Bumpus's rooms?'

'Not at 'ome, sir, not at 'ome!'

‘How?’ said Downy; ‘why, I can hear them inside

They pushed by, and Downy threw open the door. Then they both stood aghast. For, instead of the expected hurly-burly of sporting characters, they found themselves face to face with a solemn assemblage of young men in attitudes of the best dressed and starched decorum. They were seated in groups of three and four about little tables, eating raisins, sipping port, and making small talk, with an air of almost dismal propriety. Everybody was in evening-dress.

‘Holy snakes!’ murmured Downy.

‘Dog gone my rabbits!’ muttered Cheney.

Something in the nature of a ‘sensation’ ran round the room.

‘Mr. Bumpus?’ asked Downy looking round.

The little Greek god rose blushing from a corner, and came towards them with anything but a genial expression.

‘What’s all this tomfoolery?’ he said.

‘I’m afraid we’ve not put on quite the proper fig,’ said Cheney.

‘I should think you haven’t!’ said Mr. Bumpus angrily. ‘I told you what was expected. Really it’s—— it’s d—d awkward!’



An Impatient Moujik

But the President of the Amontillados came to the rescue. A burly form crossed the room, a bland and smiling person, with an eyeglass, and a sort of mayor's chain slung across his shirt-front.

'Your guests, Bumpus? Introduce me. How de do? How de do?'

Mr. Bumpus explained that they were Americans, Rhodes Scholars, and had not yet learnt the ways of English society.

Downy and Cheney both apologised with great humility.

'Not at all! not at all!' said the President. 'Very amusin'! very amusin'! Charm of novelty. Bit of colour. Broncho-busters from the woolly West, and all that.'

They were led round by the President and introduced to all the company, including the Russian Prince and the delightful Frenchman—the former an impatient moujik, whose ferocious eye was half hidden by his luxuriant hair; the latter, fourteen stone of pink flesh with all the airy grace of a ten-year-old girl.

'Great pity everybody don't come in costume,' said the President; 'Dolgonoggy in sheepskin and knout, don't you know, and De la Haye in a

blue blouse and wooden shoes. Very pretty effect, 'pon my word !'

When things had settled down a bit, Downy, who was placed near the President, explained that the party was not at all what he had looked for.

'Why, darn my socks, sir, but comin' in at this time we expected to find you all with your back teeth well afloat, stickin' lobsters and bottles in one another's pockets, same as they did in my Gramfer's time.'

The conversation ran its natural course to athletics. Downy said that at first he had some idee of jinin' the Eight; but he found it very tedious, rowin' on such a cramped little scope of river after the Washaback, so he had given it up. After a little more talk about rowing, the Russian suddenly brought his fist down angrily on the table.

'*Tchorrrt te nah !*' he growled, looking out of his bundle of hair; 'why you make all zis pretence about your rowink and your rowink-lobs? Do you sink you deceive me? You Englishmans are all 'ombog! 'ombog!'

'*C'est ça,*' joined in the Frenchman, with a great wink; 'you are zo sly! zo sly!'

‘Why, what’s the joke now?’ asked one Amontillado. ‘Where does the humbug come in?’

‘Are we spies here?’ said the Prince. ‘Why you not call sings by zere proper names? Rowink-lobbs! ha, ha, ha!’

‘Ha! ha! very amusin’! very amusin’!’ said the President, who hadn’t a notion what he meant.

‘And why the dooce shouldn’t we call them rowing-clubs?’ said another.

‘Bah! if you rowed!’ chuckled the Frenchman.

‘Well, and what the dooce do you think we *do* do? Play marbles, eh?’

‘Ah! play marbles, sly man!’

Everybody was fairly puzzled as to what the two foreigners were driving at, and it soon appeared that they were by no means agreed between themselves.

‘You know well what you do,’ said the Russian. ‘you talk of ze public affairs; you are discontented wiz ze government.’

‘Do you think we jaw politics?’

‘You conspire. You plot. You say—Sir Chamberlain, ’e shall die! . . . But ’ow?’

The Russian’s theory of rowing-clubs was

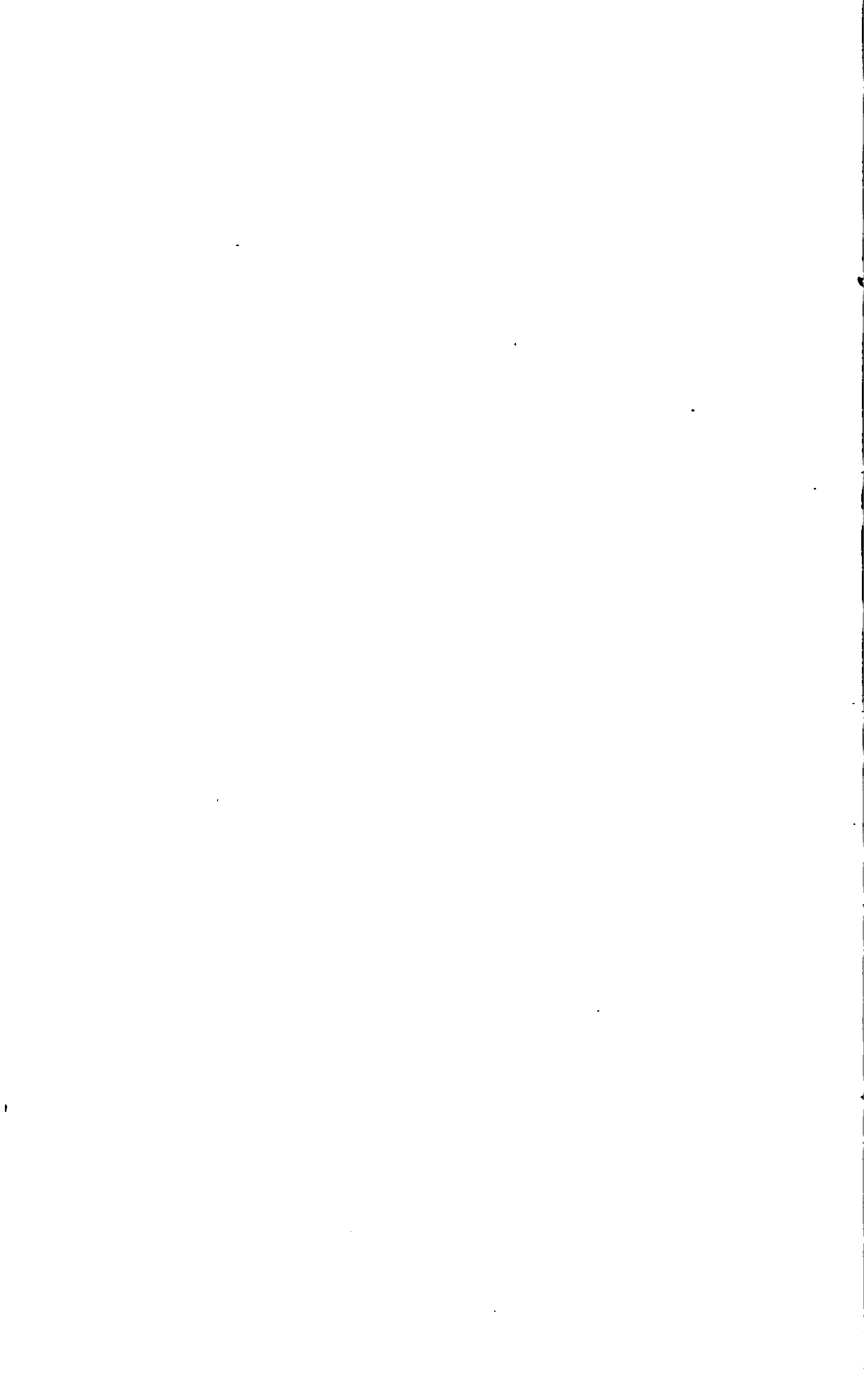
greeted with roars of laughter, in which the Frenchman joined heartily.

‘Is he stupide, ze Prince!’ said De la Haye. ‘Rowing-clubs! Je les connais celles-là! I ’ave been *canotier* mysailfe. You row a leetle down ze reefer; zen, ze jolly demoiselles zat have rendez-vous, zey are zare. You kiss ze hand and say “Tra la la!” It is all to comprehend. Oh, you Inklish men!’

And no amount of argument could convince these two ingenious foreigners that rowing was anything but an artful screen for some nefarious practice. It was obvious to them that young men would not go down and sweat at the oar unless there were *something* to be gained by it.



'I 'ave been canotier mysailfe'



XVIII

Downy saw a good deal of Chadbank Cheney, and was anxious to meet his family, especially his mother, who was, he was assured by Cheney, 'a most remarkable woman.' He was therefore greatly pleased when Cheney invited him one day to 'a little tea-romp up to my wigwam at Pusey,' to meet 'the whole caboodle.' An additional attraction held out to him was Dr. Robinson, of Gloucester College—one of the leading champions of the cause of Greek—who had promised to be there.

When Downy reached Pusey on the appointed afternoon he found the whole family Cheney assembled. Mrs. Cheney, a little, lean, bright-eyed woman in a blouse, with gun-metal watch, purse, and ticket pouch pinned up about her chest, like miniatures in an exhibition-case: she sat bolt upright in an easy-chair by the empty fire-place. Miss Cheney was a typical American girl in mind

and body ; every idea in her mind and every hair on her head had its neat appointed place ; she seemed as if it were her main endeavour in both departments to have nothing hanging out that could catch the wind : but she was as fresh and direct as a daisy. Young Piram was in the background, modest, but quite unabashed.

The chairs were ranged about the room as if for a meeting. Colonel Cheney—he was a Colonel—small and round, was bustling about the tea-table arranging biscuits and bread-and-butter.

‘How de do, Mr. Green, how de do?’ said the Colonel ; ‘take a cheer over agin the wall yonder. Chad, ain’t you gotten no other crackers to go on the blue plate?’

‘You mustn’t mind Popper, Mr. Green,’ said Miss Cheney : ‘he’s that took up with havin’ the Professor to tea, he has no mind for anyone else.’

‘They will have it he’s Professor,’ murmured Chad to Downy ; ‘but he ain’t the genuine Ky-gar.’

‘Makin’ all this splorum for an Oxford Professor ! I’m fair ashamed of him,’ said Mrs. Cheney ; ‘why you’d think it was the Pope ! Say, Pamla, is my bonnet straight?’

‘There!’ said the Colonel, drawing back to survey his arrangement of the pink-sugared

biscuits: 'the crackers look a treat now. Now, Sarah, I do hope you're not goin' to play off any airs on the Professor—a man of world-wide reputation, Chad tells me.'

'So much the worse for that, I reckon,' retorted Mrs. Cheney. 'I'll treat the man like any ordinary man. I'll give him a fair chance. But if you think I'm goin' to crawl backwards before an ordinary Greek-slinger, you don't know Sarah C. Cheney. No, sir! I don't crouch to any livin' creatur'; that's the sort of hairpin I am.'

While she was still speaking the door opened and the Scout's boy ushered in the portly, blundering figure of 'the Professor'—a bland and smiling Dr. Johnson, whose large hands waved greeting before him.

'Come off the band-stand, Sairey!' murmured the Colonel, hurrying forward to welcome the guest.

The Professor, after greetings, settled in a chair, and looked about him like some big bird of the upper air, which had come down among a flight of starlings.

'Well? So you've come across the "mill-pond," as you call it in America, to see your cousins over the water. And how do you like Oxford? Pretty place Oxford!'

‘Oh, it’s just too-my-goodness sweet!’ murmured Miss Cheney.

‘I congratulate you on your son, Mrs. Cheney. I had no notion young men could get so well grounded at Harvard.’

Mrs. Cheney, who had been silently looking the Professor over for weak spots, now relaxed into a benignant smile.

‘I’m sure everybody in Oxford ought to be vurry grateful to Cecil J. Rhodes for what he’s done for the place,’ she said.

‘Grateful? We all—recognise the compliment, I assure you. It’s a great opportunity.’

‘It is indeed, Professor. And now, sir, as a man of the world and a member of the Professorial Corpus, I should be glad if you would tell me exactly what good you think Cecil J. Rhodes expected his Will would do?’

‘It is very plain, surely, my dear madam? Oxford is the representative of a—a very high form of culture; and Mr. Rhodes evidently wished the rest of the world to participate, so far as they were capable, *in* that culture.’

‘Then you think you’re goin’ to civalise the world?’

‘That is surely the only way of looking at it?’

‘No, sir! You’ve gotten hold of the wrong end of the toastin’ fork this time.’

‘Sairey! Sairey! go stiddy!’ interposed the Colonel.

‘The object of Cecil J. Rhodes’ Will is to civilise Oxford by the infiltration of the American element.’

‘Civilise Oxford? Ha, ha! Very good! With your permission, I shall repeat that at the High Table. How they will laugh!’

‘You mustn’t mind my wife, sir; she will have her joke.’

‘Ring off, Colonel!’

‘But, seriously, my dear madam, the idea of civilising Oxford is what is vulgarly called “rather a large order,” isn’t it?’

‘There I entirely agree with you, Professor.’

‘I quite admit that in Latin verse Cambridge produces from time to time some little things that will do very well. But Latin verse is not everything, is it?’

‘It is not indeed, sir!’

‘No, madam; the true test is Greek. And when you come to Greek, you see the difference between scholarship and mere Cambridgism. Whom have they, for instance, who could produce any-

thing like Mr. Florian's "Odysseus in Oxford"? If Homer heard it, upon my word, I think he would be hard put to it to know if some of the lines were his or not.'

'And upon my word, I think if Homer heard it, sir, the pore man would probably turn in his grave.'

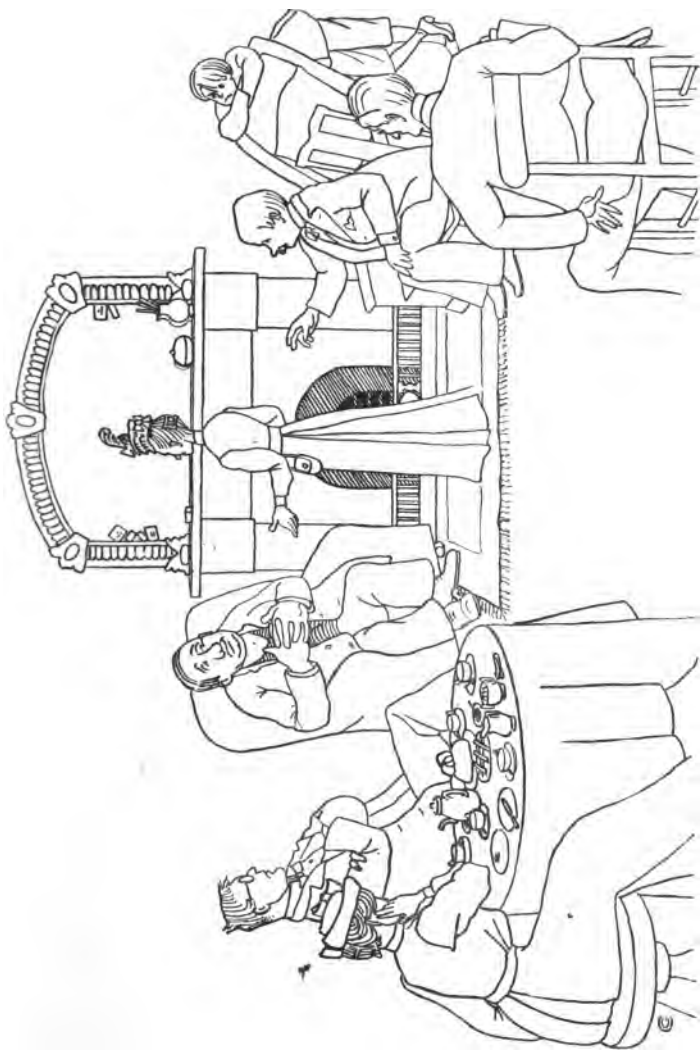
Mrs. Cheney rose from her chair and stood before the Professor with folded arms.

'No, sir! Turnin' out pore imitations of the trash that some coloured folk down South scribbled on sheepskin two thousand years ago is not Civalisation. Civalisation is Life: livin' better, doin' better, thinkin' better. And that's what I do not find in Oxford. No, sir; Oxford will need some tittavatin' before you can make it the hub of the Universe.'

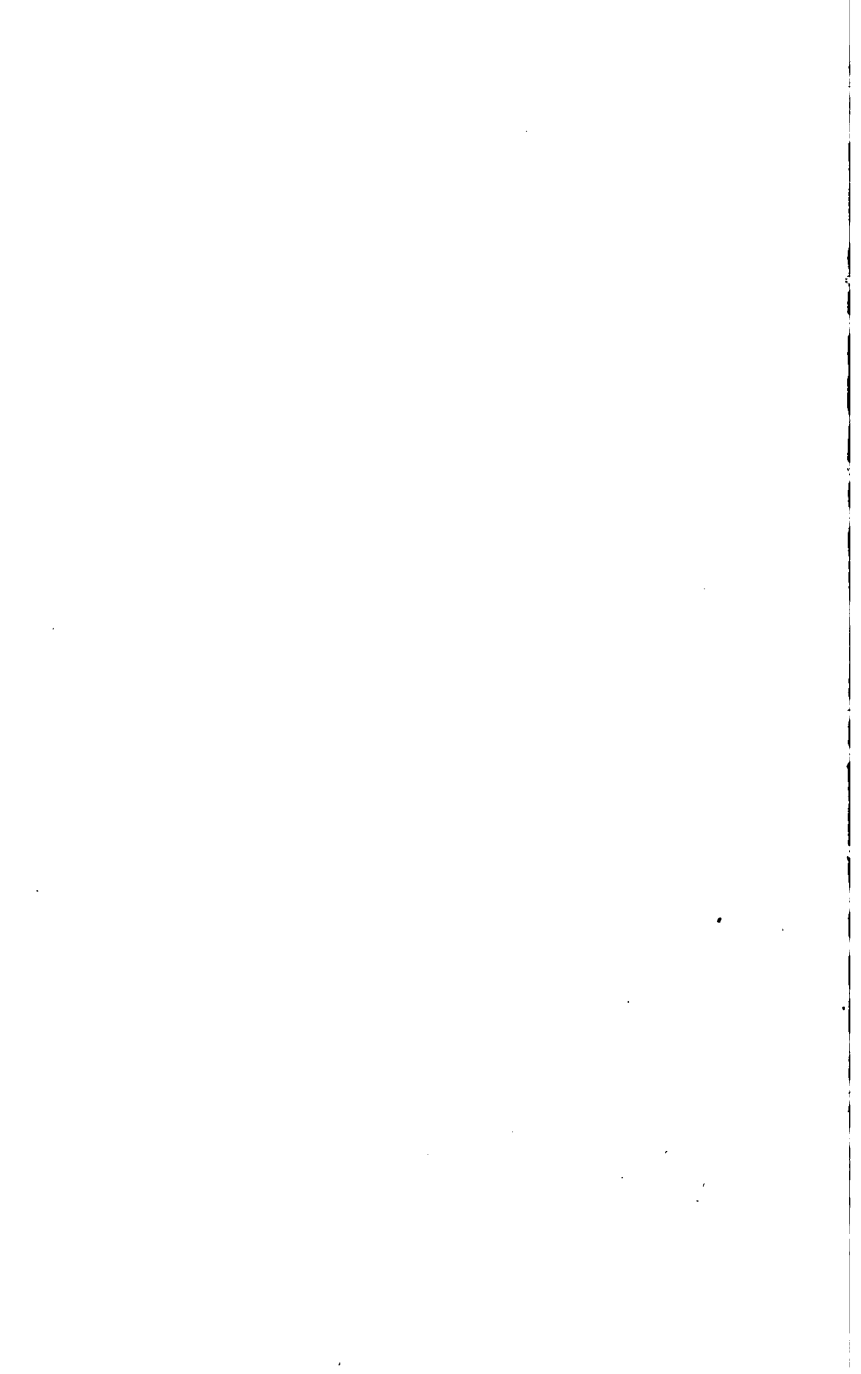
'But, my dear lady!'

'If you want to see Civalisation, go to Ameraca. Look at our Cahnstitootion, look at our Trade! Look at our overhead railways, steam-heat, and hydrahlic ullavators in the poorest quarters! Look at our Trusts: our Beef Trust, our Boot Trust, our Steel Trust, our Shippin' Trust!'

'But, surely, my dear madam, you don't mean to say that this is the ideal of civilisation to which we are to aspire?'



'What business have you to be foolin' with the Ideal?'



‘No, sir, I do not. It is the bed-rock on which you have to plant the scaffoldin’.’

‘But all the things you speak of represent only the material.’

‘An’ ef you can’t manage the Material, what business have you to be foolin’ with the Ideel? You think because you hev two alectrical tubes and six indullacate French plays runnin’ in London that you have Civalisation. But that’s not what we call Civalisation in Ameraca: it’s only oleo-civalisation. The lesson the Britisher has to learn is that you can’t get upstairs by slidin’ down the banisters.’

‘But we’re not concerned in Oxford with overhead railways and hydraulic elevators; our business is with education.’

‘Eddication? Why, what does anybody in England know of Eddication? The subject has never been looked into. Have you ever heard of Dr. MacGuffin of Goober Valley?’

‘Why, no; I can’t say that I ever have.’

‘You mean to say you’ve never read his “Outline of Mindology?”’ (Mindahlagy, she pronounced it).

‘That I am sure I haven’t.’

‘Then you know nothing of the mind and its

operations, and consequently nothing of eddication. I've bin fortnit' enough to be a fellow-citizen of Dr. MacGuffin in the township of Goober Valley, and what I know, I know from the fountain-head. To know Dr. MacGuffin is to step into a higher world, of which people in Oxford know nothing. Dr. MacGuffin begins where Eu-rope has left off. Ef you could hear that man talk, it would make you set up an' scratch. My idees on eddication I have received from Dr. MacGuffin, and you may take it from me that they are the only sound idees ever promulgated on the subject.'

The Professor testified to a great interest in her ideas.

'We must begin at the beginnin', same as Euclid does. What is Eddication? The development of Mind. Vurry well, then, we must first of all examine the mind; we must ascertain its methods and its limitations. Dr. MacGuffin has examined the mind for years: he knows the ways of the mind as you might know the ways of a tame rabbit. He was a pioneer in the backwoods, and he has built up a science which never existed before: that's the science of Mindahlagy.'

'But that's as old as the hills, dear lady; we know all about that. That's Psychology.'

‘Psychahlagy indeed! We’ve gotten beyond ghosts I hope in Goober Valley! Wull, and what did Dr. MacGuffin find? He found that Eddication was all upside down: we’ve all begun at the wrong end hitherto. We’ve bin beginnin’ with the Pertikler and endin’ with the Ginerall; what we’ve got to do is to begin with the Ginerall and end with the Pertikler.’

‘And how do you apply the principle?’

‘Take a mind—take a boy—my boy Piram here, for instance. What were the first impressions that his mind received on enterin’ the world?’

‘I should think his first impressions were connected with a milk-bottle. Ha, ha, ha!’

‘That shows how much *you* know about it. No, sir; his first impressions were those of space and time—quahlity an’ quahntity, existence and non-existence. Very well, then, we com-mence our eddication with the study of those things.’

‘At what age?’

‘As soon as the child has sense. That is Existahlagy.’

‘Metaphysics in the cradle!’

‘No, sir, I don’t hold with that: I’m agin drugs of every sort. But that is a big subject, which I will discuss with you another time.’

‘ But am I to understand that your children have been brought up on this system ? ’

‘ No, sir. Unfortnity I had not arrived at these notions, Dr. MacGuffin and Ameraca had not arrived at them in time, or my children would have bin brought up differently. Later, when the child is about ten, we come down from Existahlagy to Scientahlagy or a general view of Science. The child is put to the study of Positivism, and the writings of Mather Whitting of Chicago and his English imatator Herbert Spencer. From this we come down in time to the different branches of the scheme of science, to chimistery, natural history, physiahlagy, geahlagy, biahlagy and hominahlagy or the science of Man.’

‘ Do I understand, then, that the study of languages has no part in your scheme of education ? ’

‘ The languages have their proper place. Havin’ arrived at Man, we pro-ceed to examine him in all his relations—in his history and in his language. The young man now comes down to the study of French, German, and Austrian, and a minute analysis of Ameracan and its dialects.’

‘ But doesn’t Greek come in at all ? ’

‘It comes in, in its proper place.’

‘It seems to come in very late. I’ve always been brought up in the belief that we ought to begin at the beginning.’

‘That’s the old exploded system. We’re goin’ to begin at the end for the future. We must commence with the Known and worry back into the Unknown. Greek and Lattun we shall learn in passin’, on our way back to Egyptian and Cuneiform and the language of the Lost Tribes. In history we shall begin with to-day and work back through yesterday to the commencement.’

‘And how long do you think it will take to complete one’s education on this plan?’

‘An Ameracan about twenty years; a Britisher, seventy if he’s quick.’

‘Then, by the time your Englishman is educated, it’s time for him to be thinking of the grave?’

‘An’ a very good place too! Chad, I’ll take another cup o’ tea.’

Dr. Robinson seemed highly entertained with his tea-party. He showed no animosity for his heckling, but on the contrary expressed a general hope that everybody present would come and see him in his rooms ‘some day’!

‘Isn’t he just splendid!’ exclaimed Miss Cheney, when he was gone.

‘He’s sweet!’ said her mother.

‘Such a type!’

‘Very stoopid; but no end of a type. Never mind; we had a good talk.’

XIX

THE Colonel had an essay to take to his tutor, so he offered to accompany Downy on his way to St. Ives. As they walked, he expressed unbounded admiration for Dr. Robinson and 'his dialectical powers. He enlarged on his dry and caustic wit.

'The way he turned Sairey inside out! He didn't say much, but, by Heck, it was a knock-down and drag-out every time. He just wiped the floor with her. It's a wonderful thing for me to find myself movin' among the selectest spirits of the age like this. I feel cowed when I see these giants all around me, walkin' like ordinary men.'

He explained also that they had a further interest for him, inasmuch as he had undertaken to write a series of articles, for the 'Goober Valley Paralyser,' on the inner side of Oxford life, and he was anxious to begin with the Professors.

The Colonel was in Downy's rooms two days

later when a note came from Gloucester College, which ran :

‘ Dear Green,— Can you come to our Swipes Club meeting on Wednesday? Philosophical discussion. Dolgonoggy’s coming. I expect larks. Bring a friend.

‘ Yours,

‘ J. ROBINSON.’

Now there was another Robinson of Gloucester, whom Downy and Cheney met often at lectures, a round, jovial little rascal of an undergraduate, and it was at least likely that the invitation was from him. But when Downy read it out, the Colonel, thinking it was from the Professor, fell into such a state of excitement that Downy hadn’t the heart to suggest doubts ; and he invited him to be his companion.

They started at about a quarter to nine on Wednesday for Gloucester College. Arrived in the College, they stumbled up a narrow winding-staircase and reached a door, from behind which came an uproar of conflicting voices and a strong smell of tobacco. Opening it, they looked into a fog which rocked to angry gestures and excited words. Two ghosts of candles burned dimly on

the table, on either side of a great earthenware bowl; beyond was a vague suggestion of bare walls, wooden chairs, and figures of men.

As his eyes grew accustomed to the fog, Downy perceived the Russian, with his hair standing in a wild mop on his head, angrily disputing with three or four others, who were all talking at the same time.

‘No, no, no!’ shouted the Russian; ‘if I see a tree in a field, for all zat my experience tells me, ze tree goes paff when I turn my back.’

‘But supposing there’s another chap who keeps looking?’

‘Or supposing it isn’t a tree, but a bull?’

‘You’d go paff!’ cried a familiar voice, which Downy recognised at once as belonging to Robinson, the undergraduate, not the don.

A moment later Robinson trotted up to his side with greetings: ‘

‘Here you are at last. We’re having a slap-up meeting. The Moujik’s on the war-path.’

‘And what may you be discussin’ at the present moment anyhow?’

‘Why, we were discussing whether Matter exists *per se*, or only in relation to Mind.’

‘Nay, nay, mun,’ bellowed a heavy Scotchman

in spectacles ; ' we've got beyond that. The question at present is hwether Mind can be said to *ex-eeest* or only to *sub-seest*.'

' Wull, and what's your opinion anyhow ?' asked the bewildered Downy of Robinson, with an air of profound interest.

' Blowed if I know ! Ain't in my line. My business is to go round and stir 'em up with a pole.'

Little Robinson dashed off, like a good host, to a group in another corner of the room, where only three people were speaking at once. Downy heard him shout, ' What is space ?' and saw him dance away ; the conversation kindled into a fierce blaze at once.

Downy looked with apprehension at his military friend, wondering if he would be greatly disappointed to find that he had tumbled into a mob of undergraduates, instead of a select circle of graduate intellect. But that worthy gentleman evidently suspected nothing.

' Sakes, what an intallektual crowd !' he said, in a voice of awe ; ' I wish my wife was around to hear 'em ; she'd change her notions. I don't see their faces very well, but they look mighty young for Professors.'

‘They’re a new lot,’ said Downy, ‘just come in with the Government.’

‘I never thought of that ; the personnel is changed with the Ministry, is it ?’ said the Colonel, making a note of it in a washing-book which he fished out of his pocket.

‘After you with the swipes, Mr. Treasurer,’ cried little Robinson, elbowing another man away from the centre table and taking a great drink out of the earthenware pot which adorned it.

‘That’s the Treasurer of the College, is it ?’ said the Colonel, writing busily. ‘Do you know his name ? Never mind ; I’ll fill all that in afterwards.’

But an uproar was rising, and everybody was clustering round the Russian and a tall thin man, who stood slowly rubbing his eye-glasses with his handkerchief, and smiling a contemptuous, intellectual smile.

‘Silence in the pig-market!’ shouted Robinson. ‘Silence for the President!’

‘The President!’ exclaimed the Colonel, scribbling for all he was worth. ‘Sakes ! this will look tall in the “Paralyser.”’

The President held the house.

‘Your position is, that I am to depend entirely

on experience for my knowledge of my environment ? ’

‘ Zat is my position. ’

‘ On my senses ? On consciousness, perception, apperception, presentation or whatever you like to call it ? ’

‘ What else is zere ? ’

‘ *Re*-presentation, the subconscious noumenon, intuition, deduction—pure reason, in short. ’

‘ Aach, your pure reason ! Mere alias for aussority—for priests, for policemen and Cossacks ! ’

‘ It’s all very well to rail at authority. But what grounds have you for limiting me to the evidence of my five senses ? Quote me any passage in Hegel, Nietzsche, Schrader, Müller, Jevons, Deschamps, Smith, Hamilton, Brown, Jones, Berkeley, Robinson, Bain, Schneider, Liebig, Hartmann or Fichte. ’

‘ Oh, your sausage Germans ! I av never read zem. ’

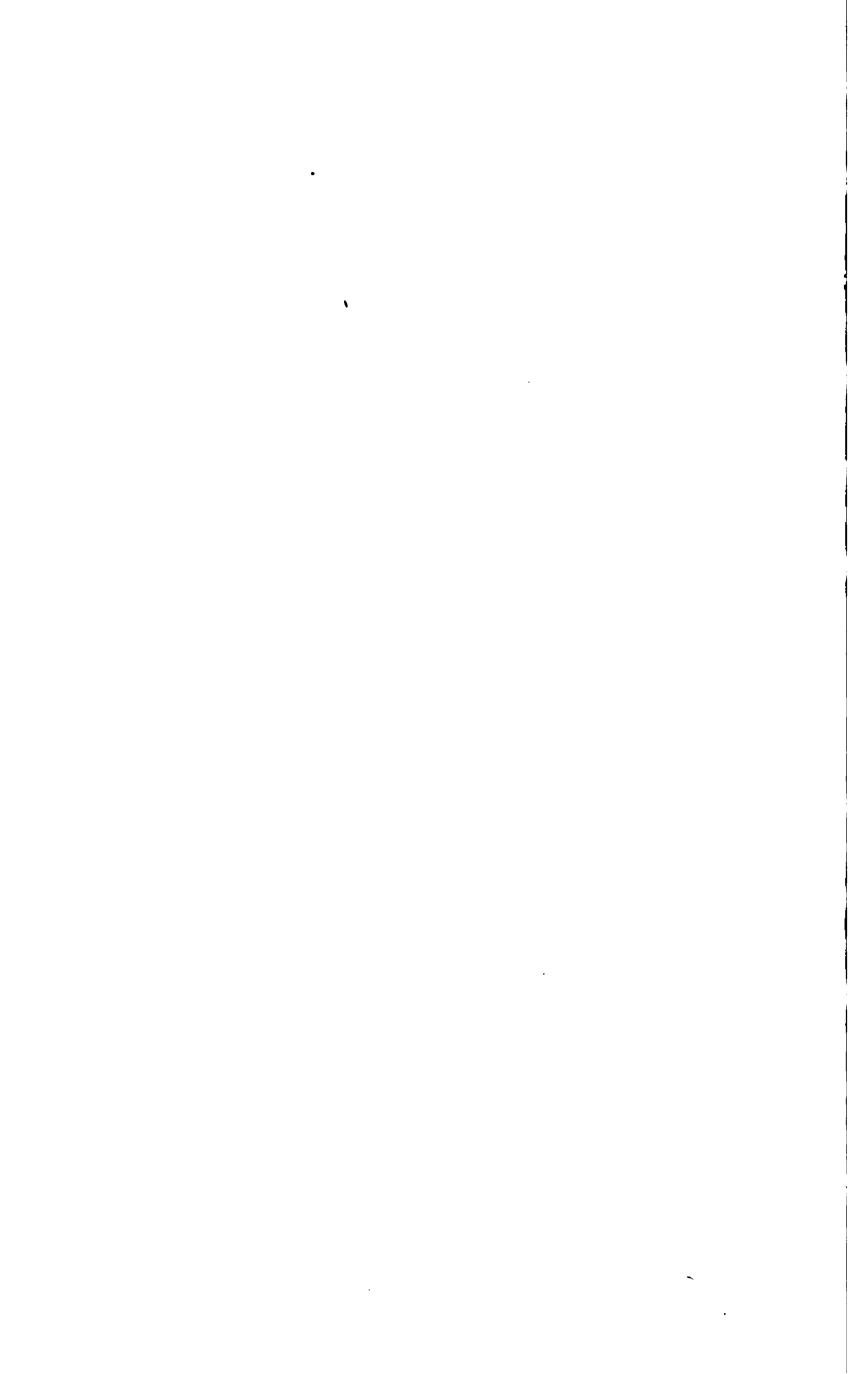
‘ Then how *dare* you argue with me on the subject ? ’

A roar of applause clinched the President’s triumph. But the Russian rose with a despairing cry :

‘ Down wiz Pure Reason ! Down wiz Aussority ! ’



'This will look tall in the "Paralyser"'



‘Down ‘em all!’ cried Downy, eager to take part in such an intellectual conversation. ‘I don’t hold with Pure Reason.’

‘Oho, you don’t hold with Pure Reason, don’t you?’ said the President, scenting new battle, and advancing towards him.

‘I reckon I’ll be off,’ murmured the Colonel in his ear, ‘and get all this stuff to press. Don’t budge. So long!’

And he departed.

In another minute Downy found himself wrapt in a whirlwind of words; all the President’s big guns were booming round him; names like Hegel, Spinoza, Kant, and Schelling were flying about his ears; and he was quite powerless to silence the artillery, never before having dealt in such warfare.

‘My senses,’ said the President, ‘speak in terms of sensation, *my* sensation. The objective world is a reflection of *my* internal cosmos. The only mind of which I am conscious is *my* mind. *I* think, therefore *I* am. But what evidence have I that *you* exist?’

‘That I exist, confound your tarnal impudence? I’d like to hear the man who’d say I don’t!’

‘Prove it! prove it! I deny it. You’re a

figment, a shadow, an unhealthy creation of my own consciousness.'

'Downy V. Green, of Greenopolis, Lavinia, created out of your blaarsted consciousness? I'd sooner have been drowned as a puppy. Man alive, do you feel that biceps? do you see that arm, and tell me I don't exist?'

'Prove it! prove it!'

'Then take that then!' said Downy, giving him a furious box on the ear.

The rest of the company flung themselves on the two disputants and held them forcibly apart.

'Let me get at him!' screamed the President; 'I'll scratch his eyes out!'

'He don't exist,' cried Robinson; 'he hasn't got any!'

'He boxed my ears!' howled the President.

'Pure fancy!' cried Robinson, delighted; 'an unhealthy creation of your own consciousness! He's only a figment, a shadow. You've got the jim-jams. Go home and take a pill.'

At this moment someone cried 'Swipes up!' and turned the earthenware pot upside down. The meeting broke up, and went noisily down the stairs, someone singing a long 'A-a-a-a-men!' The President was removed.

The Russian came across and shook Downy by the hand.

‘You av my congratulations. You av used ze argument of Geeracleetoos to ze sophist who said zere is no motion. Geeracleetoos kicked a stone: you av done better, you av kicked ze sophist.’

Downy was greatly ashamed of himself, and apologised to Robinson for the scene.

‘I’m not a scrapper as a rule; but that feller fairly raised my dander.’

‘Oh, that’s all right, old chap. We often have little rumpuses like that at these philosophical discussions. MacTavish half killed a man last week for saying Potential Causality was bunkum.’

XX

SOME idea of Downy's life at Oxford may be gathered from his letters home. Here are two of them :—

‘ May 25.

‘ My dear Grandfather,— I have just come back from the usual Sunday walk around the “ Parks.” The Parks are the Campus where the students play their outdoor games. Week-days the side-walk around the green is filled with dry-nurses pushing baby-buggies ; but Sundays it is the resort of all the toniest calico in Oxford, and we always go up in our plug-hats and J-pen jackets to have a look at them.

‘ On yesterday I had the most funny experience I have had up here yet, namely, a meeting of the Upas Union, a club devoted to what I am told is the latest thing in literature. Oxford is just streaky with literary clubs : there's an Elizabethan Club and a Catullus Club in St. Ives, besides the

semi-official "Seven Cats," which is named after the College totem. But the Upas Union is drawn from all the Houses. Chad Cheney and I were asked together by a Pusey member. I mugged up a lot of stuff beforehand; went right away through Tennyson and half of Marie Corelli, so as to be *au fait*. But it was quite wasted.

'We met at a man's rooms in the Turle. We found the Union a crowd of dismal-looking folk, sprawling about on sofas and long chairs, with the windows all tight curtained, though it was only four o'clock and the sun blazing outside. The room was lighted with an ancient-looking oil lamp, and it was all full of smoke from a little smell-dispenser that was burning in a corner.

"Ha!" says I, "magic lantern? Good!"

"No," says the President; "this is not a peep-show. We exclude the garish day on account of its vulgarity. Mr. Dredger is going to open with a paper on the use of the anapæst in erotic poetry."

'Mr. Dredger then crawled out and drooped up against an art-screen under the lamp. What his paper was all about I haven't the spook of a notion; nor had Chad. But we laughed and cheered now and again, just to jolly them up. The rest of them lay back and groaned at the full-

stops like a crowd of half-saved anxious mourners yearning to come right through.

‘After Mr. Dredger’s song and dance was over things drifted into a desultory conversation on the subject of Woman at large. They didn’t exactly talk: one of them would rubber and roll his eyes by and again, and get rid of some fetid remark with the soft pedal down, and the rest of the crowd would wiggle faintly with their feet as if he had hit them right there.

“‘I loved when the world was young,” says one. “She was a girl then; now she is a woman—the saddest change that life has to show.”

““Woman,” says another, “what is Woman?—a rib of the old Adam.”

““And nice little outlets too, some of ’em,” says Chad.

““The true man,” says another chump, “never loves but one person in his life—himself.”

““Woman has invented nothing,” says another; “man has had to invent everything, even Woman.”

Chad took him seriously, and allowed that anyways they had a certain talent for keeping the house in order.

““What is order?” inquired one of them.

"Nature knows nothing of order. Order," he allowed, "is only a symmetrical disarrangement of chaos."

'At which the Upases raised a feeble cheering, like the "crowd outside" at the theater.

'Another one allowed that a virtuous woman was the most dismal thing in creation.

"They are not dull because they are good," chips in another; "but they are good, no doubt, because they are dull."

"If I am ever obliged to talk to a virtuous woman," says another, "I talk to her as if I loved her."

"That must be rather bilious for her," allowed Cheney, who was getting to feel unpolite.

'I made a few remarks on Tennyson's "Maud," by way of shifting the topic.

"I haven't read it," says one; "it's too long. Everything's too long."

"We don't read Tennyson," says the President.

"Tennyson is only read in the servants' hall," says another.

'Then one of them allowed he was going to rehearse a little thing of his own, called "Dawn: Verses Written in Dejection near Hinksey." Pink

vellum copies were handed round afterwards.
Here are a few of the stanzas :

‘ Pensive at early dawn
I wander in the plain,
What time the sun, yet unrefreshed,
Plods on his rounds again.

‘ The little birds, awaked
From slumber by his ray,
In peevish madrigal renew
The tedium of day.

‘ While in a danksome dew
The flow’rs to earth restore
The noisome exhalations they
Imbided the day before.

‘ There was a heap more in this salubrious style,
about winding-sheets and other dry goods. It was
addressed to a lady described as “laughter-loving
Inazil.” He holds her out some solid chunks of
hope, however, towards the end.

‘ Oh, other eyes shall read
The love I never told,
In other years, when thou and I
Are rotting in the mould.

‘ Not for the sad-eyed bard
Thy quick and smiling quips :
My blistering kiss shall never sear
The laughter from thy lips.

‘ Not by the poet’s grief
Shall thy young life be marred.
Wait on ! Thou’lt find some lover yet ‘
More blithesome than the bard.’

‘Lord ! how we squealed, did Chad and I. We couldn’t help it. We just laughed till the tears ran down our legs. The Upas crowd all had kittens at that. They allowed we had better not have come if we were going to mock at sacred things that were above our heads. We allowed they were about right.

‘It was no good trying to smooth things out, so Chad and I chased ourselves, and went down to walk it off across lots by the river.

‘Please thank mother for the chaw-gum. Love to all.

‘Your affectionate grandson,

‘DOWNY VERDANT GREEN.’

‘June 10.

‘My dear Grandfather,—I will try to answer your question as well as I cleverly can, though I am not sure of the exact meaning of the word myself. A Smug is not exactly a dig or plug, and not exactly a Christian Brethren man. The best define I have heard is that he is a “low-spirited prig.”

‘There is a condensed jackass here, wearing the name of Beeby, who lectured me my first night on drinking ale in Hall, which I understand to be his long suit. He afterwards gave me a tract which

invited me to "Come into the Ark." Not if there's two of him there, I reckon. He has a soft pink face and a lone smile, as if he were amused at something sad which happened about a hundred years ago. He is a half-saved, one-horse, four-flush, narrow-gauge mule, who was not sufficiently thumped at his marm-school; and I have put him next to that fact. Everybody hates him. The Bursar allows he spends his time, like a good Christian, in making enemies in order to have the pleasure of forgiving them. He is, in fact, a Christian Brethren man. Now *he* is a smug; but he is not a plug.

'But there is another sort of Christian Brethren man up here who is not a smug. And you'll be as astonished as I was when you hear that the chief of this crowd is Bill Sykes I wrote you about. I thought he was no end of a buccaneer, and fully expected he went the whole hog on his day out. But the other fellows just laughed at the idea.

'But for all that he is a blamed good chap, and I like him as well as any. He is goodwooled. He keeps the rest of the College no end in order. He put a fellow under the pump on Sunday for swearing; and last night some rowdies who were raising Cain in the yard and allowed they would do as they

pleased, waked snakes when he allowed he would come out and give them particular Jessie if they stayed ; they just squandered and lit out for home.

‘ He’s no slouch of a democrat too. The Bursar allows that Bill is such a radical he never walks out in the Spring on account of the primroses. Bill is chief of an association, with a branch in London, for making friends of the criminal classes. There was a crowd of these Bowery Toughs everywhere one day last week : it was the annual beanfeast. I steered clear ; rented a wheel and did Woodstock.

‘ However, I will try to explain what a Smug is more clearly when I am over in Recess.

‘ The Dean is a good fellow, too, though unsound on the Greek question. There has been a special Alumni Assembly about that, and the place is still full of country parsons who came up for it. One of them was haranguing about it in College the other day— a mean little crowd with a red nose. “ If you abolish Homer and the verbs in *mi*,” he said, “ Christianity and Civilisation go to pot.” He was ploughed twice before he got his pass, I hear, and what he knows about Civilisation beats me. But the Dean agrees with him. He says you can’t make scholars out of shorthand and modern languages ; he allows the students need

something harder to grit their teeth on ; and barneyed about "completed civilisations," "the purely human standpoint," and other groceries. But he has a clear head otherwise, and I am giving Greek another chance.

'No, I have not had my limb pulled any. They never tell me any of the mule stories they let off on Grandfather Verdant. The family Green does the laughing now. You should hear some of the things they say when they don't mean to be funny. Chad mentioned to one of them about the iced water in New York hotels, and what do you think he said ? "Most unwholesome stuff, I should think," he said. Chad and I looked at one another and just yelled.

'The Tennyson line you allude to is not "sweet female sophomores," but "sweet girl graduates in their golden hair." There is no danger for me, I can assure you ; I am over here to work, and not for that sort of thing. Moreover, the sweet girl-graduates that I have seen do not sling the golden-hair line to any great extent, as they are none of them under fifty. I reckon "sweet girl undergraduates" was what he wanted, but it wouldn't fit the meter. Love to everybody. All's well on the Potomac.—DOWNY VERDANT GREEN.'

XXI

It would take a very big book to describe all the many things that Downy did during his first term at Oxford: all the places he visited and all the friends he made. I must be passing at once to his departure from Oxford at the end of his freshman term.

It is worth while, however, to mention that, in spite of his many mistakes and a certain faculty for trampling on people's toes, he was popular both in the College and out of it. Of his social success outside the College there could be no greater proof than his election to the Kaloikagathoi Club, well known at the time as the selectest Club in Oxford. He was apprised of it in a letter from Bumpus, who told him that the whole thing was settled and only needed the formality of his consent to clinch matters. Bumpus enlarged also on the social advantage of belonging to it, and the uniqueness of the honour for an American.

Before going through the formality of consenting, Downy went and asked Bill for his advice on the subject.

‘The Kallikags? my eye! Allow me, old chap,’ said Bill. ‘You *are* going it. You won’t know us. You’ll be the only Ives man there: they’re mostly Pontiusites.’

‘And what do they do anyway?’

‘Do? Well, they wear a peculiar tie, and lunch together once a year, and their fathers aren’t allowed to have less than ten thousand a year.’

‘What else?’

‘Nothing else, except that they cut everybody dead.’

‘Then are they great friends among themselves?’

‘Lor’ no! not they. They never look at one another except at the annual lunch.’

Even allowing for exaggeration, it hardly seemed a lively club to belong to, however select. So Downy refused the proffered honour of membership, to the immense chagrin of Bumpus, who complained that Downy had once more ‘put him in a very awkward position.’

XXII

Downy cherished a great admiration for Mrs. Cheney, dating from the day of the 'little tea-romp' at Pusey. He agreed with Chad Cheney that she was a 'most re-markable woman.'

'She has a great mind,' he was saying to Chad, as they lay in a punt under the trees on the Cherwell one day.

'She has that,' said Cheney; 'but she has no eddication. It ain't for me to say anything against the woman that's done all that she has for me; but she ain't sound. She has meanders. She flies off the handle and scratches the paint. Bein' able to tackle most any subject herself, she don't realise what a crowd of tacklin' other folks have done before her.

'But for stirrin' up other folks to think, she hasn't her equal anywheres. You'd be surprised to see what a session of admirers she has up here: she's surprised herself; she never had them in

the States. None of your half-and-halfers, mind you, but real toney women—popular folk up in the red end of the town. And she sets there and just talks and talks, and they never grow tired. They come to her with philosophical doubts and things, and she answers them all; and she tells 'em what to read, and they read it too. Not the sort of women you'd expect neither. Some of 'em just parlour-hens that never had a thought in their heads before.

'There's one of 'em now, a bachelor-girl—Miss Shelmerdine—that lives with her aunt Lady Wagstaff in the Norton Road. She's a real born beauty she is—a dizzy blonde, a regular Johnny-jump-up-and-kiss-me. She's not young, mind you, not by any means; but you never see such hair, such eyes, such hands. Oh, she's a dreadful nice girl. Why, even your friend Pawling, who met up with her at my mother's shanty to a little smear the other day, was quite enthusiastic; he allowed she was "rather decent," which is very steep for him. She's well known among the stoodents: they've bin in love with her, man in man out, I'm told, these fifteen years. It's part of the course.'

'What they call a college-widow, eh?'

'That's it, Bub, a college-widow. She lives

about between here and London. But she's gone tired at last of cavortin' around, playin' Bridge and what not. She's done Crystal-gazin' an' Christian Science ; an' now she says my mother's the first live woman she's met, and they're as solid together as the two ends of a pea-nut. She's comin' over to stay with us at Goober Valley this summer. That young do-less Bumpus is sparkin' her—he's her stiddy company just now ; but I reckon she'll soon get cold feet on *him*. Oh, she's a real geranium, she is ! She's a scenery ; she's the pure quill and no water in it. I don't want to put it up too steep, but she's—— she's no slouch !'

'Ain't you rather struck on her yourself ?'

'Me ? No, *sir* ! No calico for me till I'm fifty.'

XXIII

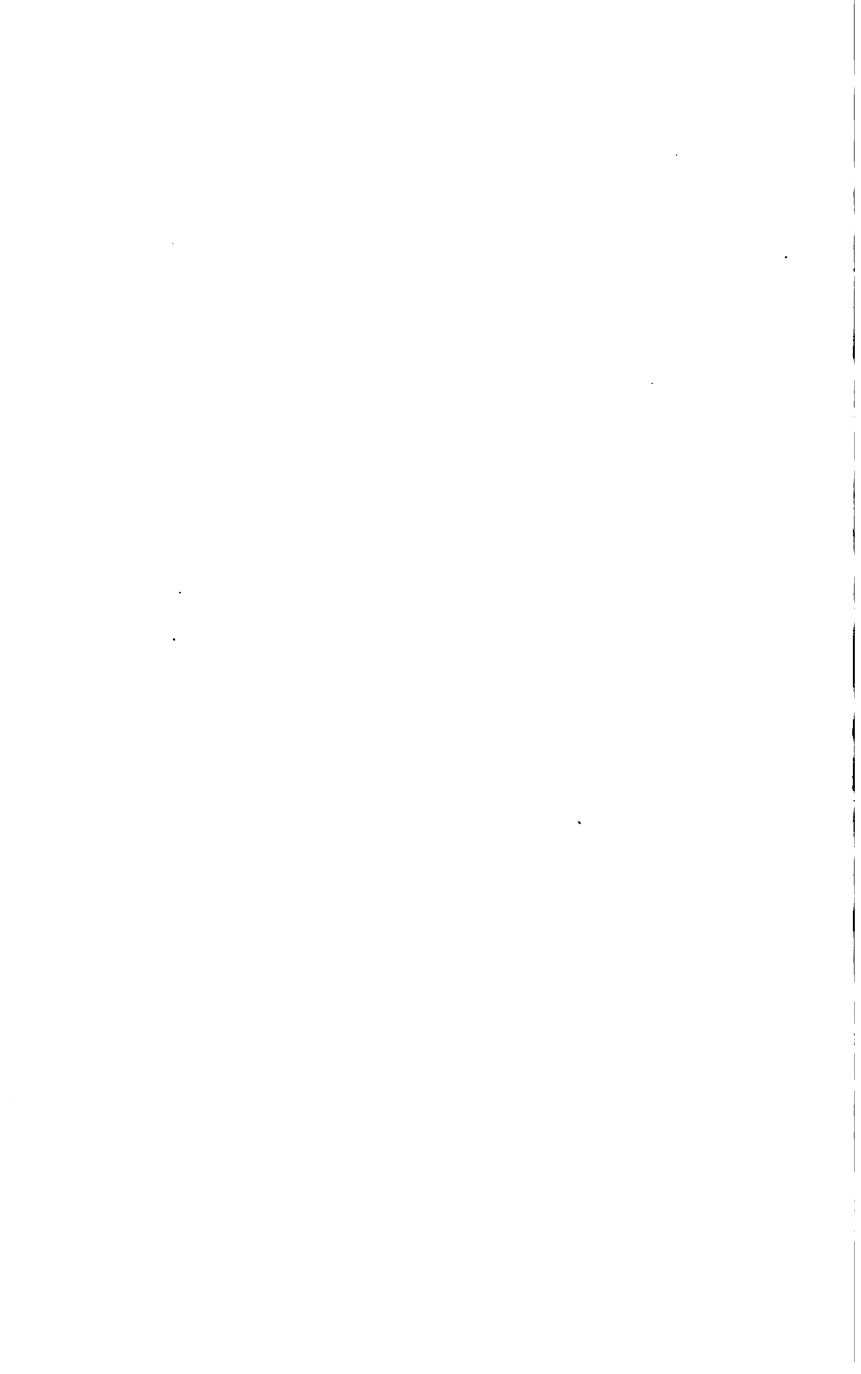
THE term had been a wet one. Isis had overflowed her banks. The Eights had been put off. The crews had come out of training and gone in again.

But at last the weather cleared, and the races began. Oxford became like a hive at swarming time. Everybody left his proper vocations. Everybody had his sisters up, or if he had none of his own, he got somebody else's sisters up. The gardens and the quadrangles fluttered all day long with parasols and flounces. Their hosts took them round the sights they had never seen themselves, and told them the legends they had never heard. They breakfasted them, lunched them, picnicked them, eighted them, dined them, concerted them, danced them, and then began again at the beginning.

The crews, the cause of it all, took no part in the festival, except to labour at the oar, and take their beef redder and their beer stronger than



Took them round the sights



before. They lived a Lama-life apart. The Russian Prince and the delightful Frenchman must have thought them well punished for their deceit in using Isis as a stalking-horse.

The St. Ives crew was a good one, but they started low in the line of boats; they had no hope of getting Head of the River, as the hero's College boat should do. Still, they counted on bumping their way four places up at least.

In the first four days they had already achieved this, and attained the second place in the second division, with the stern and glorious hope of bumping the leader next day and rowing the race again. For even with racing on the Indian file principle, there are too many boats in the Eights for all to go together, and the boat which battles to the top of the Lower Division must that afternoon take the lowest place in the Upper Division and struggle again.

As Downy came along the path under the St. Ives barge the fifth day, he heard a shrill familiar voice issuing from the crowd on the top:

'A man kin push a deal harder than he can pull,' it said. 'The whole system is wrong. Ef on'y you'd set facin' the front, you could do without that little passenger in a jacket at the after-

end. Ef I had a boat an' a crew of my own buildin' at the back, way yonder, I'd crumple up the whole procession afore it got to the Kink, or whatever you call it.'

There was no doubt about it; it was Mrs. Cheney. Downy found the whole family on the top, grouping together with two or three English girls and as many Americans, who formed the little lady's bodyguard for the day. Pawling had brought them aboard.

The Eight had already gone down to the starting-point, so Downy gave up the idea of running with it, and joined the circle. It always refreshed him to be among his own countrymen, where he could speak his own language without fear of being misunderstood.

'I thought we were never goin' to see you again,' said Mrs. Cheney. 'We're off in two days.'

'Ain't you goin' to finish the term out?'

'Not me and Pamla and Piram. Chad and the Colonel stay. But I'm not satisfied with the place, and we're goin' for good. Pamla's not gettin' on quick enough for my idees; she's bin attendin' Laboratory six weeks, and not made single noo discovery yet.'

'Have you bin havin' a good time this week?'

‘I should think so!’ said Mrs. Cheney; ‘a reel boss time!’

The Americans all chorussed their assent.

‘We’ve had a dandy time!’

‘A gallows old time!’

‘Jags of fun!’

‘Oodles of it!’

‘Doin’s every day an’ all day,’ said Mrs. Cheney; ‘concerts, balls, and basket-meetin’s, and I don’t know what not. We haven’t bin to bed till four since Sunday.’

‘Mrs. Cheney’s clean tuckered out,’ said one of the American girls.

‘Me tuckered out?’ exclaimed Mrs. Cheney, indignantly. ‘I’m as fresh as a new-laid egg. Why, I’ll dance any of you fryin’ size gals off your legs every time.’

‘Oh, you don’t know Ma!’ said Miss Cheney. ‘She’s the worst of the crowd. And that dressy and pertikler, they wouldn’t know her in Goober Valley. You should have seen how she got up and snorted this morning when she found her new pull-back dress with the curleycues hadn’t come; she was runnin’ up an’ down the rooms like a mad thing.’

Conversation was interrupted for a time by the

arrival of the Second Division. Wild excitement prevailed as the first boat came swinging round out of the bend of the river, the Gut, as it is called in Oxford. Another boat was hard behind it.

Excitement grew on the barge, and the word went round : ' It isn't our men ! '

' What, they've gone tired, have they ! ' said Mrs. Cheney, ' and stopped paddlin' ? Well, of all the slack-twisted ! Call themselves men, and couldn't row that little bit ? '

' They've bumped ! ' cried a St. Ives man, discerning signals on the further bank ; ' bumped before the Gut ! '

' Then they ought to be more keerful,' said Mrs. Cheney.

' But they *meant* to ; they've collared Soggins. They've won their race ! '

' Well, they might have finished up anyway,' said Mrs. Cheney. ' What are we settin' here for ? '

' But they mayn't ! '

' Mayn't finish up ? Fine sort of racin,' I call that. We don't have that sort of racin' at Goober Valley.'

The Eight was received with uproarious delight ; half a dozen yelling men clustered round each oarsman, and carried him off to cool in the barge.

The whole vessel rocked, and the din was deafening.

‘Gracious, what a splorum over a little race that didn’t even come in sight!’ said Mrs. Cheney.

Things calmed down in time, and Mrs. Cheney recovered her accustomed equanimity.

‘Why, if that ain’t Bumpus!’ she said, giving a little dry nod in answer to that worthy’s gracious lift of the hat, as he drifted past in a Canadian canoe.

‘Where—where, Ma?’ said Miss Cheney, craning forward. ‘O, now, doesn’t he look sweet! Isn’t he just the cunningest little man!’

She waved her hand.

‘My, ain’t he dinky!’ said another of the American girls.

‘Just as killing!’ agreed another.

Little Mr. Bumpus bridled with pleasure, as he saw how much interest he excited.

‘Gracious, what a deal of rubbering to see Bumpus!’ said Mrs. Cheney. ‘I don’t like Bumpus. I have no use for him.’

‘I just *love* him,’ said Miss Cheney.

‘He thinks himself no end of a warm baby.’

‘That’s so,’ agreed Miss Cheney; ‘he’s just the vainest little thing. But such a type!’

‘He’s too down-towny for me; he gives me the willies. He’s always dressed to kill. I don’t like to see a man so primpy.’

‘But what a picnic he gave us on Tuesday, Ma!’

‘I was never so worried with a basket-party in my life. And then it rained. And no wonder.’

‘But that wasn’t his fault.’

‘Well, it was none the drier for that. Besides, the party was given for Ada Shelmerdine, not us. He on’y asked us for manners.’

‘I just *love* to see him beavin’ Miss Shelmerdine.’

‘It fair disgusts me to hear the man honey-foglin’ her. He don’t care a red chip for *her*; he sparks her for fashion, because she’s the prize-gal.’

‘But what a dinner he gave us on the ground! Such chicken-fixin’s you never saw, and champagne, and salmon with short sauce, and every manner of do-ups.’

‘I don’t love such store-made doin’s. And Pamla lost her josey, an’ I had to walk up through all the sposh without my gums. . . . There now, if I wasn’t near lettin’ it slip my mind. We’re havin’ a basket-meetin’ ourselves to-morrow, Green, an’ you’re just *bound* to be there. Bring a pie, and one or two air-tights. Mesopotamia,

twelve sharp. And Ada Shelmerdine will be there, an' if you don't just *love* her, and knock the wedges out of Bumpus, I'll never believe your name's Green agen.'

Downy accepted the invitation with alacrity.

'Mind you're there. It's your last chance. Ada Shelmerdine is goin' to London to-morrow for a month, and then she's comin' over to summer with us in Goober Valley. She says she'd just die without us.'

As far as rowing was concerned, the day ended dully; for Pontius, the boat ahead of St. Ives, had a good crew, and though St. Ives made a gallant fight for it, there was an obstinate foot or two of daylight between the St. Ives bow and the Pontius rudder, which refused to be reduced. So St. Ives made no second bump that day.

'Never mind,' said the men of St. Ives, 'they'll start fresh to-morrow.'

XXIV

Downy arrived rather late at Mrs. Cheney's picnic. The Dean had been overlong at his lecture.

'Hey, wot!' he cried, as he stepped down on to the boat-house raft at Mesopotamia, and espied Chad Cheney in the crowd of girls and men that covered it.

'Hey wot yourself!' responded Chad cheerfully, 'you're late.'

Bumpus was putting off at this moment in a punt, with a slim lady in a straw hat.

'Which is she? Where is she?' asked Downy.

'Miss Shelmerdine? That's she, just settlin' in the quishions yonder.'

'The gal in the cow's breakfast? Holy snakes! She is a canary! But you didn't say Bumpus was comin'?'

'We didn't know ourselves. We found him

here by chance, an' he allowed he happened to be goin' the same way. So we asked him.'

The little flotilla took its way gently upstream a mile or so between the flowered banks of the Cherwell. Then they put ashore in a meadow for lunch.

'We'll have to be spry,' said Mrs. Cheney; 'Ada Shelmerdine has to catch the cars at three, and Pamla allows she won't miss the boat-racin', not for anything.'

When the boats had been emptied of their cushions and of the various packets of food which the guests had brought with them, by order of Mrs. Cheney, Downy lost no time in settling to the task his hostess had imposed on him, of 'knocking the wedges out of Bumpus.' But he needed no urging; he was head over ears in love within five minutes, and never left Miss Shelmerdine till he was sent off by Mrs. Cheney, with the rest of the men, to wash up.

Bumpus had tried in vain to joke himself out of this duty, but Mrs. Cheney had ordered him off with the rest, and told him it would do him good.

He deserted his post, however, before the washing was ended. And when Downy had finished putting all the baskets back in the big boat, he

found that Miss Shelmerdine had been carried off by his rival to the other side of a little promontory and deposited in a punt. Bumpus had left her there to run back for the rest of the cushions.

‘That’s just my size!’ said Downy to himself, going across to the punt.

‘Hadn’t I better be polin’ you down the creek, Miss Shelmerdine,’ he said, ‘in case you miss the cars?’

‘Come along!’ said Miss Shelmerdine, with a little laugh.

And Downy laid hold of the punt-pole. But just as he was about to step on board, Bumpus came running down the field.

‘Stop, stop! *I’m* going with Miss Shelmerdine,’ he said.

‘No, sir!’ said Downy, ‘a third would make a crowd.’

‘Your place is in the randan.’

‘I’m goin’ with Miss Shelmerdine in the punt.’

‘But it’s my punt!’

‘It’s my gal!’

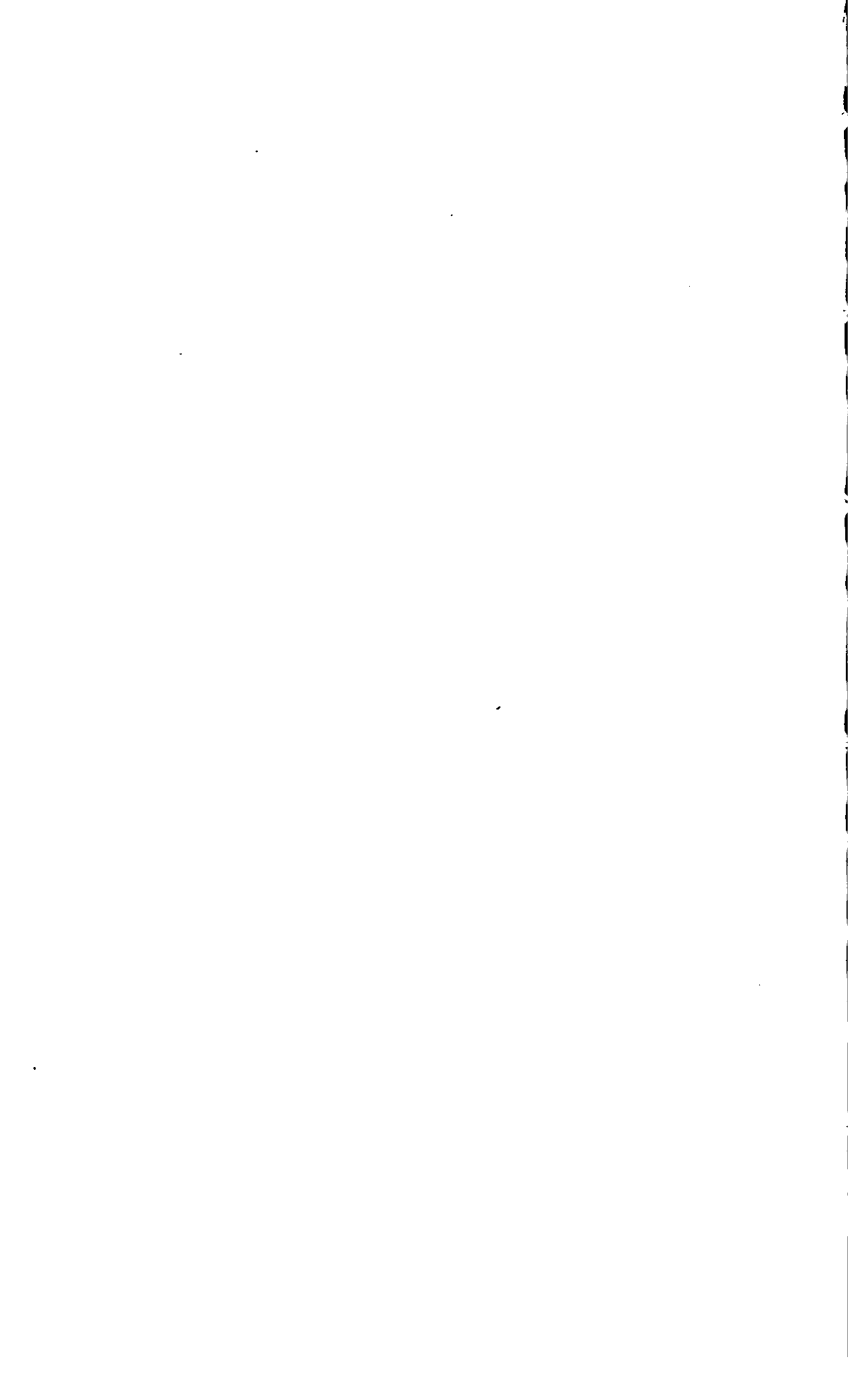
‘Come, sir, I think I have a claim——’

‘I’m goin’ to jump your claim.’

‘Will you kindly get out of my way?’ said Bumpus, breathing hard.



Miss Shelmerdine



‘Your way’s yonder.’

‘I shall push you!’ said the little man.

‘You’d best take out a burial-permit first.’

Bumpus put up a little white fist and tapped him on the front of his shirt.

‘Now, now, no scrappin’!’ said Downy. And without more ado he shoved Bumpus back on the grass and put off.

The whole fleet was soon under way.

Bumpus glowered across the water at the punt, as he laboured at the randan oar, and was silent. Mrs. Cheney kept looking in the same direction; she wondered what the conversation was like. Downy could be seen talking animatedly, waving his loose hand and frowning; Miss Shelmerdine was smiling all the time, and now and again her laugh came ringing over the water.

At Mesopotamia Miss Shelmerdine made her adieus, and said she had had a splendid picnic: she had never enjoyed herself more; and as for the voyage home, she declared that Downy was the most refreshing boy she had met since she was a young woman. Mr. Bumpus, very subdued, declared he would see her home.

The rest of the party walked down the winding

bank of the Cherwell to the barges on the Isis. Mrs. Cheney walked with Downy.

‘Well, and how have you bin comin’ along?’ she asked.

‘Bully!’ said Downy.

‘Poor Bumpus!’ said Mrs. Cheney; ‘she’s given *him* the shake and no mistake. Sniptious little do-less; he’ll be madder’n a hen. And how do you like her?’

‘Like her?’ said Downy, ‘I don’t like her; I love her! I adore her! She’s the sweetest, babiestic, honeyest, loveliest, hunkiest thing I ever saw in all my days. She ain’t human. She ain’t made of the same paste as other folks.’

‘Go slow, Downy Green—don’t cut it too fat; don’t slop over.’

‘Slop over—me? Why, I can’t fill up. I feel the funnies all over when I think of her; I’m just paralysed. Venus in her prime was never a circumstance to her. Talk of crystal-gazin’, she has two I could set and gaze in till Almighty Crack.’

‘Why didn’t you tell *her* all this?’

‘Why didn’t I? I did.’

‘Well, if you ain’t the beatenest boy! You told *her* that?’

‘That and a crowd more off the same shelf.’

‘Well, you’re no slow-poke!’

‘I allowed I was a rag before her, and she could just take and wipe her boots with me. I allowed I would stick to her like a porous plaster. I allowed I was goin’ to marry her. And I *will* marry her, through earthquakes and volcanoes, and I swan my death it’s true!’

Mrs. Cheney stopped and squealed with laughter.

‘Well, if you ain’t loaded for bear! Marry her? Why she’s thirty-five if she’s a day! O Laura, you’ll be the death of me.’

Downy looked so solemn that she soon stopped laughing.

‘I like you, Downy Green,’ she said, ‘you’re a live man. You do your sparkin’ with a big spoon. But as for marryin’ Ada Shelmerdine, the sooner you get that idee out of your head the better. She’d laff in your face: I doubt she did. She’s a woman with notions, but she’s no fool.’

‘You’re on’y a boy now, an’ may be you’ve never bin in love before, because you haven’t rubbed up agin an opportunity. Lor’, you’ll feel like that an’ worse a hunderd times before you marry, a Prairie child like you. You’ll go

through whole rows of Miss Flora MacFlimsies before Miss Right comes along. An' when you're a full-size number-six man with a progressive weskit, you'll hitch up an' be as happy as a clam with some jelly-fish gal that'll pass her time sewin' you rag slippers an' playin' bean-bag with you in the posy-yard. Ada Shelmerdine ain't the sort that men marry, let alone boys.

'But see here, I'm not one for keepin' young men in a glass case till the bride an' the parson are ready at the rails; sparkin's a good sharpenin' rock for a young man's character. Would you like to see Ada Shelmerdine soon and often?'

'Would I breathe!'

'Well, if you're hurtin' for her so I've an idee. Will the Professors let you leave to-morrow?'

'I'd not inquire.'

'If I put you on a Transatlantic with Ada Shelmerdine, would you promise me to behave? Not to go cavortin' around and tearin' your shirt like a short-tailed bull in fly-time, goin' down on your prayer-bones on the deck, and such like?'

'I'd promise anything!'

'And I'd see you kep' it. Well, it's this: Ada Shelmerdine is not comin' next month to stay with us, as we'd fixed it up; she is comin' right

over along with us to-morrow ; and if you'll take your affirmation to behave yourself, you may come too.'

Downy could find no words to express his gratitude to Mrs. Cheney. He found words later, when he told Cheney about it.

'Your mother's grand, Chad! There's no snide about *her*. She's, she's——' He hesitated for something strong enough to express his admiration. 'She's an old rip-tail snorter, that's what's the matter with her!'

They shook hands over it.

'Thanky, thanky, old feller,' said Chad; 'it's very kind of you to express yourself so warmly about my mother.'

But he wagged his head over the whole affair.

'It ain't sensible,' he said; 'it's warm-hearted, and all that, but it ain't sensible. I think my mother's makin' a mistake; she's flyin' off the handle agen.'

'You don't understand,' said Downy. 'Oh, I wouldn't be so cold and calculatin' as you, Chad, not for anything!'

'Well,' said Chad, shrugging his shoulders, 'it don't make any difference to me; it ain't *my* funeral. I've told you what I think, and there's an end of it.'

XXV

THE Eight claimed immediate attention. Downy went prancing down the tow-path to the Iffley end like a young gazelle. There he joined the throng of St. Ives men assembled by the waiting Eight, with rattles, trumpets, bells and pistols, ready for the race to begin. The coaches stood watch in hand, warning the crew, second by second, of the coming boom of the starting-gun. 'Five, four, three, two, one, go-o-o-o!' Then everyone yelled all the way to the Gut, and rushed along the towpath towards Oxford; rattles crackled, trumpets brayed, bells rang, pistols banged, each instrument with its esoteric meaning for the struggling crews — 'They're a length ahead of you, half a length, a quarter of a length, bumping distance!' And above the uproar rang out Downy's voice: 'Let her went! Let her rip! I, V, E, S, Iyiyiyiyives!' Past the Gut, and the Pontius stern still ding-donging with the Ives bow, and the pistols doing

platoon-firing drill. And as they came in front of the barges, up went the acknowledging hand of the Pontius cox at last, and both crews drooped, groaning, on their oars and the race was over, and all St. Ives started a yell that never stopped till dinner-time.

The Eight celebrated their record of six bumps and the end of training by an aldermanic dinner at the 'Ram'; and each of them brought two or three friends to help them celebrate. Downy was among them, besides a mild little elderly gentleman, who had been at the College years ago, and had come up to see his son row. The elderly gentleman regaled them with tales of the terrible wild things they used to do in his days; and how they not only had a bonfire on the least occasion, but 'jammed the old Dean on the top of it too, by Jove!'

Then they started in a Bacchic rout through the streets for College; and Bill, in an access of strength and jolly fury, uprooted a wooden post from the pavement at the end of the little passage by Toby Hall and walked at the head of the procession chanting his war-song, shouldering his trophy, and looking like Hercules let loose; and the little elderly gentleman was hoisted up shoulder high

and carried along, until he suddenly got nervous and begged to be put down, and then ran away to his hotel and went to bed.

As they passed along the Broad, singing and shouting, a hairy head and two astonished eyes were thrust out of a first-floor window. It was Prince Dolgonoggy.

‘Has it begun?’ he asked, in a hoarse voice, strangled with emotion.

‘Has what begun, old man?’

‘Ze Revolution. Hurrah for ze Revolution! I am wiz you.’

Loud cheers were raised by the Bacchanals, and cries of ‘Hooray for the Revolution!’

‘Hush!’ said the Russian; ‘my landlady may hear you.’

And with that he climbed out of window, and scrambled down the water-pipe, and was hoisted up to take the place of the elderly gentleman.

‘To ze prison! To ze prison!’ he cried; ‘to liberate ze unfortunates. Down wiz Sir Chamberlain!’

XXVI

MEANWHILE everybody in College had been preparing for the celebration of victory, by priming themselves with champagne and other liquors. As the 'Ram' party entered the inner quad, heads were popped out from all the windows, and cheers rent the air.

The College set to work at once to make the bonfire. Men ran hither and thither fetching firewood, doors, mats, chairs, and other combustibles; for which, by-the-by, with their usual child-like innocence in commercial matters, the Dons charged them next day at the rate of a guinea a mat, and a shilling a bundle of firewood.

The Dean leaned out of his window and looked on benignantly, with a pipe in his mouth, thinking of to-morrow's tariff. He had taken the precaution of having the College fire-hose laid ready in the quadrangle, to prevent a conflagration.

Then the bonfire was neglected for a time, while the College went through the solemn

ceremony of a 'Lady Louisa,' a rite practised only in St. Ives. Bill fetched out from his rooms a great silver cup, the 'Lady Louisa' itself, so-called after Louisa. Lady St. Ives, who presented it to the College. This cup is kept in charge of the captain of the College boat and produced only on the last night of Eights, if the College has made not less than four bumps. Generations of men pass their time at St. Ives without even setting their eyes on 'Lady Louisa.'

The whole ceremony consists in setting this vessel up, full of champagne, in a niche of the wall, under the College arms, and, after speeches, drinking it round.

The speeches were short. Bill said their success was all Stroke's doing; Stroke said if it wasn't Bill, it was the Dean who had coached them; and the Dean said it was the whole crew, and the College carried it by acclamation; and as a reward for their efforts the eight oarsmen and the cox were hoisted up and carried through the bonfire.

Every window was a blaze of light; every door was widely and hospitably open; champagne and rum-punch were everywhere. The rest of the evening was spent in dancing round the bonfire, and running to join some Bacchanalian circle, and

running out to dance again. Bill, with no more than a thimbleful of wine inside him, was flying about like a Berserker, breaking and burning: a cup of cocoa and a crowd were enough to make his head go round. Downy went about uttering loud American cries, such as, 'How is that for high?' 'The Chinese must go!' 'Now is the time to subscribe!'

At midnight he met Bill and two or three others in the Garden Quad dragging Beeby along by the heels in his pyjamas; he had been caught red-handed in the act of sleeping in bed while the College rejoiced, and Bill was going to make him pass through the fire to show his patriotism.

'Hullo,' said Joe, 'seen anything of Dolgonoggy?'

'The Dago?' said Downy; 'last I saw of him he was goin' round the front quad in a damaged condition, layin' a snake fence for all he was worth, and allowin' he would have Chamberlain's blood.'

They found him, later, embracing the Bursar and swearing that *he* was Sir Chamberlain, and he would never, never leave him.

And so things went on till about three in the morning, when one by one the roysterers fell out exhausted, and went to bed.

XXVII

BUT Downy would have no such creeping tricks as bed. The nearer dawn approached, the more he thought about Miss Shelmerdine. He was determined not to be left alone: his state of mind demanded a companion.

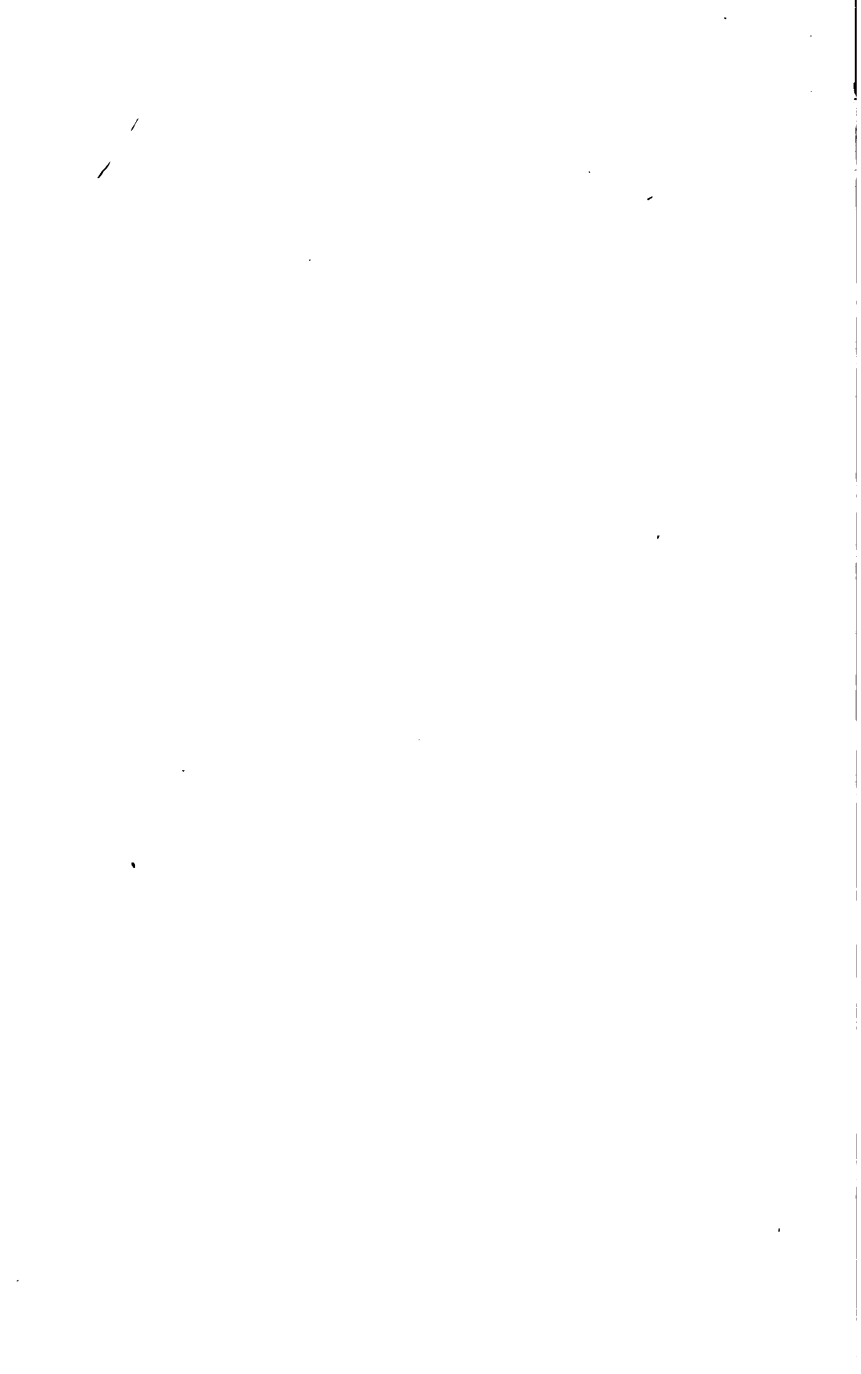
After hammering in vain at several sported oaks, he found one at last standing hospitably open. It was Pawling's. Entering, he found that worthy asleep in an armchair, to which he had retired some two hours ago. He roused him, saying :

'Come along! You and I must be out to-day in the glorious dawn.'

Pawling was whirled away, against his good sense, by a stronger will than his own. They scaled the garden-railings, ran down the long lawn in the darkness, and so over the garden-wall at the far end. A fine dawn-rain was



Out in the glorious dawn



falling. Pawling still expostulated as he sat poised on the glass-bottles for the last jump into the street.

‘I call it awful rot, all this sort of thing!’

But he slid down, and they went along the road at a quick trot, past the Broad, past Wadham, down through Mesopotamia, and out into the fields along the Cherwell. They never paused till they reached the scene of yesterday’s picnic. Downy dragged his drowsy companion along through the dewy fields, and at last deposited him, sleeping already, on a bench outside a sleeping inn, lost in the middle of the country.

Pawling was aroused at last by a great smack on the thigh, and found Downy sitting at his side, panting and elated.

‘I’m goin’ back to Ameraca on the same ship as Her! Do you realise all that means?’

Pawling blinked at him sleepily.

‘An’ now, let’s be puttin’ home for College, for I’m as hungry as a graven image.’

What Downy had been doing during the hour or two while Pawling slept is not quite clear.

‘He was awfully beany, and all that sort of thing,’ was Pawling’s account; ‘and the cows were

trotting about, and he was bawling, and a lot of tommy rot ; it's no good asking me.'

By breakfast-time he was gone. And so ended Downy V. Green's first term at Oxford.



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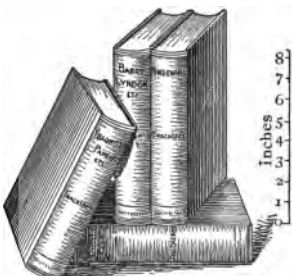
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